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## Marxism: not David Storey's cup of tea

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Marxism: Not David Storey's Cup of Tea

by

Tien-ti Wang

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
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## INTRODUCTION

By common acknowledgement the revolution in the history of modern English drama came with John Osborne's Look Back in Anger, first seen at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in May 1956. British plays in the past, according to Henry Popkin, showed "mainly the upper and upper-middle classes....When some serious emotional crisis arose, their special concern was always to show their good taste and breeding by refusing to express their emotions."<sup>1</sup> Look Back in Anger impressed the critics mainly because of "the outspokenness of its language, its open criticism of establishment values, and its articulate, thoughtful working-class hero."<sup>2</sup> The historical significance of this play is articulated by John Russell Brown, "Look Back in Anger was herald of many plays that took even more liberties. A new sense of reality swept all restrictions away."<sup>3</sup> John Russell Taylor summarizes that the playwrights who respond to this new aspect of realism in British theatre have two distinguishing features: "...their tremendous variety...and the fact that the great majority of them have working-class origins."<sup>4</sup> Social mobility brought by the Second World War has largely destroyed

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Popkin, ed. The New British Drama (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Oleg Kerensky, The New British Drama (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), p. xvii.

<sup>3</sup> John Russell Brown, A Short Guide to Modern British Drama (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> John R. Taylor, Anger and After (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 13.

social barriers in Britain, and many of the writers who have emerged from working class to middle class have felt alienation from their families. David Storey, both novelist and playwright, is a typical example.

Born in 1933, the son of a Welsh miner, David Storey has been categorized as a working-class writer. He started to write plays in his middle thirties after careers as a painter, professional rugby player, and successful novelist, and has attracted increasing critical attention after receiving many awards, which include Rhys Memorial Award, for fiction, 1969; Maugham Award, 1963; Evening Standard award, 1967, 1970; Variety Club of Great Britain Writer of the Year Award; 1971; New York Drama Circle Award, 1971, 1973, 1974; Faber Memorial Prize, 1973; Obie Award, 1974; and Booker Prize, for fiction, 1976.

His working class background obviously has endowed his works with a naturalistic characteristic. Many critics have regarded him as a conscientious naturalist, or a skillful documentarian with a talent for capturing a mood, a feeling, or an atmosphere. Carol Rosen, for instance, has commented that "Storey's plays attempt to reconstruct with an almost documentary accuracy the world of clocks and calendars, schedules and routines in a circumscribed world."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, most of Storey's plays up to the present have been set in realistic scenes with dialogue faithful to the characters' backgrounds. In a talk on art he gave his underlying principle of creative activities:

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<sup>5</sup> Carol Rosen, "Symbolic Naturalism in David Storey's Home," Modern Drama, 21-22(1979), 278.

I want to create something like a piece of sculpture....I am struggling to make something impersonal through highly subjective means. An audience can take the impersonal work and make it personal. That's what used to be called in the old days the magic of the theatre.<sup>6</sup>

On another occasion Storey said that the play should be "vulgar in the fine sense of the word; it needs to be played with vulgar energy and directness."<sup>7</sup> This is another trait of his plays. A vitality pervading his works echoes the uncouth working class subjects dealt with in most of his plays. This sense of "vulgar energy and directness" is mainly conveyed through the realistic colloquialisms and dialect phrases of his dialogue.

Storey's writing springs from a tortured conflict between his artistic intuition and the pragmatic values rooted in the community in which he lived. In the BBC series of talks, "Writers on Themselves," broadcast in 1963, he described how he spent the unhappiest two years of his life trying to combine the two worlds, being an art student in London and going to the north of England to play professional rugby football at weekends:

I seemed, through these two activities, to be trying to resolve two sides of my temperament which were irreconcilable - the courtship of a self-absorbed,

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<sup>6</sup> Howard Kissel, "Striking an Observant Pose on the British Experience," Woman's Wear Daily, 12 Oct. 1976, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> John Higgins, "David Storey: Night and Day," rev. of Mother's Day, by David Storey, Time, 16 Sept. 1976, p. 13.



intuitive kind of creature with a hard, physical, extroverted character: the one the very antithesis of the other.

He explained that northern working people in the industrial West Riding, where he lived, distrust isolated and solitary men. They believe that men should be absorbed in society; the solitary artist is condemned there. Storey recalled,

This, then, was the situation to which, not undramatically, I felt I had been condemned: to be continually torn between the two extremes of my experience, the physical and the spiritual, with the demand to be effective in both.<sup>8</sup>

As a drowning man begins to swim, so he started to write, producing novels, in his words, like "acts of despair."

This conflict between the physical and the spiritual is reiterated in his plays. Usually his characters are grouped into two categories: those who can make the society work for them and those who cannot. He explores the value systems held by individual characters and the society at large and depicts the interactions between these two parties.

These value systems are mostly manifested in the characters' conceptions of work. Work is the subject matter in the working-class people's lives. It functions as the means to achieve social cohesion, a substantial source of personal dignity and self-respect, and sometimes

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

is the cause of individual alienation in an unsympathetic society, such as with Arthur in The Farm and Paul in The Contractor. Storey contributes to the theatre by presenting his observations of the relation between man and his work and making the audience see deeper aspects of themselves in his plays.

A similar emphasis on the relationship between man and his work is found in Karl Marx's works. Marx's materialistic philosophy explores the influence of man's way of life (his means of making a living) on his thinking and feeling. He holds,

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their productions.<sup>9</sup>

Marx sees self-realization exist in man "as an inner necessity, as need."<sup>10</sup> Man himself must realize his potentials through work, and his self-realization is determined by his success in carrying out his objectives which confirm his individuality, and which "become for him the objectification of himself."<sup>11</sup> So man's existence is being a worker, and he is alive inasmuch as he is productive. In this process

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<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx, German Ideology (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx, The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), p. 144.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

man realizes his own essence.

But man cannot attain an authentically human existence in isolation but only in togetherness with others. To reach a higher level of human existence, one that enables him to develop his potentials, man needs his fellowmen as coworkers. Marx holds that "Man's existence for the other and the other's existence for him" is an essential characteristic of man: "just as society itself produces man as man, so is society produced by him....The human essence of nature first exists only for social man; for only here does nature exist for him as a bond with man...as the life-element of human reality."<sup>12</sup> Work makes a man a member of human society, and "Man's making of products is his active way of being a fellowman."<sup>13</sup>

According to Eric Fromm, Marx's central criticism of capitalism is the perversion of work into forced, alienated, meaningless labor, hence the transformation of man into a "crippled monstrosity."<sup>14</sup> Marx asserts that to emancipate men from the crippling influence of specialization to develop the full, universal man, it is necessary to abolish capitalism and adopt socialism through violent revolutions. Marx believes that in the ideal socialistic community, without private property, each individual identifies himself with society. Man recognizes his true abilities and needs. The individual contributes to the society

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>14</sup> Eric Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1961), p. 42.

"according to his ability" and receives from it "according to his needs."<sup>15</sup> Hence the individual exists in the real world and enjoys a life of totality.

David Storey has been considered a Marxist by the Russians who admire his work.<sup>16</sup> It is obvious that Storey's principal concerns lie with the working class, and, in Kimball King's words, he "records the life of the working class people perceived by him with precision and sensitivity."<sup>17</sup> This study attempts to explore the Marxist elements in David Storey's plays, and to assess the validity of the statement that David Storey is a Marxist writer. Eleven of his plays will be discussed: The Restoration of Arnold Middleton (produced 1966), 1967; In Celebration (produced 1969), 1969; The Contractor (produced 1969), 1970; Home (produced 1970), 1970; The Changing Room (produced 1971), 1972; The Farm (produced 1973), 1973; Cromwell (produced 1973), 1973; Life Class (produced 1974), 1975; Mother's Day (produced 1976), 1977; Sisters (produced 1978), 1980; and Early Days (produced 1980), 1980.

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<sup>15</sup> Karl Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme (New York: International Publishers, 1938) p. 155.

<sup>16</sup> Kimball King, Twenty Modern British Playwrights (New York: Garland, 1977), p. 231.

<sup>17</sup> King, p. 134.

## CHAPTER 1: STRUCTURE AND THEME

## Structure

Technically the structure of Storey's plays falls roughly into three broad categories: Home, The Contractor and The Changing Room exhibit poetic naturalism, by which Storey means, "a poetic convention of drama quite distinct from literalism, where you try to represent life photographically."<sup>18</sup> The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, In Celebration, The Farm, Life Class, Mother's Day, Early Days, and Sisters belong to traditional plays, where the elements of exposition, the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the catastrophe are introduced. Finally, Cromwell is an example of his episodic style which does not fall into the previous two categories.

Home is a slice-of-life documentation of life in a mental home. With no action on the surface, dialogue, and the tension is carried out through the seemingly desultory and discursive chat between the characters. At first two men, Jack and Harry, meet and talk in a genteel manner in a garden where two metal chairs and one metal table are supplied. After they leave for a walk, two women, Majorie and Kathleen, come to take the seats. With Majorie's "Cor blimey's" (a Cockney accent) and Kathleen's tendency to lift up her skirt, the women's demeanor designates a social class lower than that of the men. The scene ends with the men inviting the women to eat lunch together.

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<sup>18</sup> Mel Gussow, "Talk with David Storey, Playwright and Novelist," New York Times, 28 Aug. 1977, Sec. 7, p. 11.

Following lunch Kathleen takes a walk with Harry, leaving Marjorie and Jack. Finally, the women leave together before the tea time. A young man, Alfred, takes away the chairs, leaving the men weeping. It is a typical example of Storey's naturalistic works in which the playwright's attitude toward the subject as well as the audience is neutral, and the characters he selects are common, everyday types; the language he uses is realistic, and the kinds of materials he selects contain no dramatic action. The audience, in hearing the dialogue, may not be able to tell the difference between the world on the stage and the world in reality. Says Theodore Strongin, "Mr. Storey pitches the characters just short of the grotesque, drawing you so far into their world that you cannot comfortably label them as sick."<sup>19</sup> The characters are not "mad" in its literal sense. However, being mentally and emotionally disturbed, they can not cope with life in the real world. Storey thinks that "the reviews did a disservice to the play in saying that it was about a nuthouse....It sets you away from the emotion, from the suffering, whereas the characters...are what you might meet in the street every day."<sup>20</sup> However, while the characters retain a rather realistic awareness of life as it is, Storey does allow them to exhibit psychological symptoms that qualify them for staying in a mental home. This point will be more thoroughly approached later. Most critics find

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<sup>19</sup> Theodore Strongin, "New Plays by Storey Stars Two Knights at the Royal Court," rev. of Home, by David Storey, New York Times, 20 June 1970, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Hayman, "Conversation with David Storey," Drama, 99 (1970), 49.

this play symbolic of a larger society. Nicholas holds that Storey "sees England as a blank country of gently crazed melancholies quietly lamenting their lapses of life and energy."<sup>21</sup> Jack Kroll maintains that "Storey's characters are also meant to epitomize the eroded vitality of Britain and, by extension, Western man."<sup>22</sup> Harold Clurman suggests that "This 'Home' may be construed as England or, quite boldly, the world today."<sup>23</sup> Carol Rosen similarly finds, "The minimal setting of this play houses a naturalistic reconstruction of contemporary asylum life, a paradigm of thwarted yearnings, a dramatic idea of petrified action, and a self-conscious sense of the stage as the world in a parenthesis."<sup>24</sup> Storey himself discloses how he approaches this play,

(the play) lives for me almost in the measure that it escapes and refuses definition. The rejected Home I understood completely, so it had the deadness of a demonstration; the other one, the produced version, rather mystified me, but it had taken on an independent life of its own.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Nicholas De Jongh, "Storey's Line," rev. of Home, by David Storey, Guardian, 8 Oct. 1970, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Jack Kroll, "Lost Avalon," rev. of Home, by David Storey, Newsweek, 30 Nov. 1970, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> Harold Clurman, "Theatre," rev. of Home, by David Storey, Nation, 21 Sept. 1970, p. 252.

<sup>24</sup> Carol Rosen, "Symbolic Naturalism," p. 278.

<sup>25</sup> John R. Taylor, The Second Wave (New York: Hill and Wang, 1971), p. 145.

The Contractor and The Changing Room both describe an activity, a process, in which the characters participate in a communal effort to do something: building a tent or playing a game. The process of this activity becomes the plot. In The Contractor during Act One and Act Two a huge marquee is build by five workmen for the wedding of the contractor's daughter, Claire, and is dismantled in Act Three. In The Changing Room, the players in a rugby league enter the lock room before the game, change their clothes, joke around, listen to the club chairman's pregame talk and go out to play. After the game is over, the players take a shower, change again, and the interactions between the people involved in these activities become the material of the play. In his attempt to be accurate in the portrayal of the material, Storey selects not the commonplace but the representative, and he organizes the materials in such a way that the structure and the documentary portrayal of these two plays reveals the nature of a larger reality. In writing The Contractor, Storey recalls, "I wanted to do a play without any dramatic gesture where the reality of what people are is the drama rather than the irreconcilable conflicts."<sup>26</sup> These two plays are poetic in the sense that they are rich in connotative value. Clive Barnes suggests that "The Contractor could be seen as a parable of the loss of empires,...the necessary incompleteness of a man's fulfillment... anything is permissible with this classifically simple metaphor of rise

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Billington, "Making Life Work on Two Levels," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, The Times, 4 Apr. 1970, p. 21.



and fall."<sup>27</sup> John O'Connor finds in it "such themes as the disintegration of the family, the social structure, the British empire, and even Western civilization."<sup>28</sup> Catharine Hughes sees it as "clearly a symbol of destroyed illusions and failed dreams."<sup>29</sup> To T. E. Kalem, "what emerges subliminally from The Contractor is that life runs the inevitable course of the rising and setting of the sun."<sup>30</sup> Storey himself also recognizes other possibilities, "I see it more and more as being about...the decline and fading-away of a capitalist society. Or I have seen it as a metaphor for artistic creation...all the labor of putting up this tent, and when it's there, what good is it?"<sup>31</sup> The Changing Room is equally suggestive. Kalem sees it as a "metaphor for the war of existence."<sup>32</sup> Walter Kerr holds that "The play must be taken as choreography - a space for dressing and undressing and for being born, shaped, broken, and returned to dust."<sup>33</sup> The exhibitions of

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<sup>27</sup> Clive Barnes, "The Contractor," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, New York Times, 9 Dec. 1971, p. 63.

<sup>28</sup> John O'Connor, "Intriguing Inhabitants in Storey's Contractor," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, New York Times, 9 Apr. 1974, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> Catharine Hughes, "Tenting Tonight," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, America, 3 Nov. 1973, p. 334.

<sup>30</sup> T. E. Kalem, "On to the Triple Crown," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, Time, 5 Nov. 1973, p. 84.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor, The Second Wave, p. 145.

<sup>32</sup> T. E. Kalem, "Sisyphus Agonistes," rev. of The Changing Room, by David Storey, Time, 18 Dec. 1972, p. 84.

<sup>33</sup> Walter Kerr, "The Changing Room: Something Like Magic..." rev. of The Changing Room, by David Storey, New York Times, 18 Mar. 1973, Sec.

sound, color, and action on the stage are compelling, which has fascinated Storey's audience. John Stinson attributes it to the

tendency of most theatre goers to be mesmerized by any process realistically performed on stage, whether it be as simple as the frying of bacon and eggs, or as complex as the erection, by a relatively complicated and quite exact process, of a huge tent that covers nearly a whole stage.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise the appeal of The Changing Room, "the audience was intoxicated by the smell of all that liniment pervading the theatre and by the sight of fifteen athletically built males engaging in crude horseplay while, at times, totally naked."<sup>35</sup> Other critics, such as Clive Barnes, see the situations in both plays as large, beautiful metaphors of life with almost infinite suggestiveness. Says Barnes, "Mr. Storey is a master at making articulate the inarticulate."<sup>36</sup>

The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, In Celebration, The Farm, Life Class, Mother's Day, Early Days and Sisters more or less show the dramatic divisions of introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and catastrophe or denouement although the plots do not readily

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2, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> John J. Stinson, "Dualism and Paradox in the 'Puritan' Plays of David Storey," Modern Drama, 20 (1977), 131.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>36</sup> Clive Barnes, "David Storey's Contractor," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, New York Times, 18 Oct. 1973, p. 66.

fall into these five categories.

The Restoration of Arnold Middleton treats a series of events in the life of a history teacher, Arnold Middleton. The conversation between his wife, Joan, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Ellis, whom Arnold finds easier to communicate with, reveals Joan's desire to have Mrs. Ellis move out. The tension gradually increases when Arnold, who at first appears to be a playful young man, begins to act in an eccentric manner. He takes a suit of armor to school and walks it across the stage of an assembly hall filled with students. Later, at a party held in his house, he terrifies his friend, Hanson, by aiming a loaded rifle at him and pulling the trigger, knowing that the firing pin has been removed. The climax dwells on the point where playfulness has turned to madness when he takes Mrs. Ellis to bed, and then on a later occasion pretends to Hanson that she does not exist, "Isn't that a miraculous sight? A tea-tray elevated through the air entirely by its own volition." (Mrs. Ellis is carrying it.) As a result, Mrs. Ellis decides to move out and the tension is released. Arnold's madness seems to take the form of bizarre fantasies, which leads him in and out of trances. The play ends with Arnold's restoration to normality by Joan's forgiveness of what he has done and his own conviction that he can come out from his psychological shell and face life as it is, although less intensely.

In Celebration deals with a family occasion, the fortieth wedding anniversary of the Shaws, an old coal miner and his wife, which brings their surviving sons home together again for one night. The dialogue

discloses the background of this family, and the school activities of the sons. The tension increases when Andrew, the iconoclast, confronts Colin, whose gross pragmatism he never accepted. The climax is at the point when Andrew showers his father with his bitter resentments toward his mother, "The soother-downer. The shoddy, fifth-rate, sychophantic whore...." The tension is gradually released when Andrew agrees to stay in a hotel overnight instead of continuing his onslaught at his parents. The catastrophe comes, not as a tragic failure of the hero in the traditional play, but as a rather humanistic and chivalrous act on Andrew's part when his reconciliation with Mrs. Shaw is symbolized by their dance before he leaves.

The Farm deals with the announcement to his family on a farm of the son Arthur's upcoming wedding. The dialogue similarly gives an introduction to the background of the son and the family. The rising action is speeded by the imminent coming of his bride-to-be, and the climax comes on the morning when each family member is dressed up waiting for her arrival, as the father acknowledges, "Thy invited her,....That's what we're all collected...that's why we're all on bloody tenterhooks, you know." The tension abates when she fails to come. This play does not end by Arthur's leaving but continues with Albert, the boyfriend of the youngest daughter, joining the family's breakfast. This is essentially a naturalistic conclusion suggesting that life eternally goes on with all the elements of disappointment and happiness mingled together.

Life Class focuses on life in a studio, where the art teacher, Allott, presents his view on life and art through directing a group of students to draw a nude model. The dramatic climax is provided when Allott proposes to pose himself in the nude. Instead, a male student, Mathews, strips and pretends to rape the model, Stella, "Oh God....Here! It's lovely(.)" while Allott refuses to intervene as a teacher. Consequently he is dismissed by the principal. The slackened tension ends in students drifting out of the studio, expressing their responses to Allott about his impending leave, and the principal's final comment, "I believe in forgiveness, Allott,....It's the one indispensable principle of human growth."

Early Days deals with the life of an alienated retired politician, Kitchen. Again there is no plot on the surface, only the dialogue of the characters reveals the old man's hopeless suffering. Kitchen lives with his daughter, Mathilda, his son-in-law, Benson, and his granddaughter, Gloria. He constantly irritates his family and alienates himself from them. When the family's irritation reaches its summit, he leaves home stealthily, wandering in the village where they live. Gloria's boyfriend, Steven, finds him and brings him back to the family's attention. Kitchen is at the moment dreaming of a journey he took as a child. This experience foreshadows his failing health in the last scene, where he is seated in a garden chair. The doctor discloses that he only has a few months to live. The play ends with Kitchen's illusion of another journey, "so tall, I thought the bridge would fall."

So high, the people on it looked like flies."<sup>37</sup>

Sisters describes the tragedy of an illusionist, Adrienne. The play starts with her arrival at the house of her sister, Carol. It is gradually revealed that this house has been turned into a brothel by Carol and her husband, Tom. A welcome party witnesses Adrienne's beautiful dance, which impresses all people in the house. The dramatic tension gradually increases when it is disclosed that Tom goes to her room on the party night, which causes a quarrel between him and Carol. Toward the end of the play Adrienne is found to be a deserter from a hospital. The climax dwells at the moment when some of the hospital staff come to take her back. She pleads with Carol, "I want you....I need you, please!"<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, she is still taken back by them with screams of "No!"

Mother's Day stands out in Storey's plays not only because this is the only comedy Storey has produced, but also because the plot is relatively complex compared with his other plays. This play shows an abnormal family, the Johnsons, and the chain of events triggered by their innocent lodger, Judith. She turns out to be the daughter of a rich man, Waterson, who hires Peters, a private detective, to trace her elopement with a married man, Farrer. The dramatic tension gains strength when Mrs. Johnson decides to sell Judith to Peters, who already notified Waterson of Judith's location. A series of fights, disguises,

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<sup>37</sup> David Storey, Early Days, Sisters, and Life Class (London: Penguin, 1980), p. 53. Subsequent quotes are from this text.

<sup>38</sup> David Storey, Early Days, p. 230.

and trickery ensues, which holds the dramatic tension high till the end of the play, when Waterson and his wife, after paying a huge sum of money to restore their daughter, visit the Johnsons to express their gratitude, and the Johnsons proudly acclaim their "family achievements."

Cromwell is a stylistically independent play. It is a highly compact account of the changing fortunes of a group of Catholic sympathizers in a Cromwellian occupied Ireland. The protagonist, Proctor, gives his allegiance at first to the Catholics. When he finds that, like their opponents, they also kill to preserve themselves, he switches his allegiance to a political cause. In disillusion, he decides to withdraw from the war and find a secluded place to live with his wife, Joan. Their quiet life is again disturbed by the proletarians and the bourgeois soldiers who are fighting against each other. At the end of the play, Proctor and Joan decide to escape to an unknown place where "...beyond the darkness,....Do you see the light?" Peter Ansorge notes that "The lines all scan beautifully and the content might be compared most closely to the blood-stained nihilistic violence of Edward Bond's Lear."<sup>39</sup> It demonstrates Storey's pragmatism, "The purely literal level has to work first,....Leave the audience to fathom the symbolic level."<sup>40</sup> Some critics, such as John Simon, have seen an epic tint in some of the metrical portions of the dialogue and in the heroic

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<sup>39</sup> Peter Ansorge, "The Theatre of Life," Plays and Players, 20(1973), 32.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

portrayal of the protagonist, Proctor.<sup>41</sup>

### Theme

Thematically, Storey's plays are mostly concerned with the unification of disparate elements. Being obsessed with the conflict between his artistic intuition and the pragmatic values in the society, Storey is particularly interested in the nature of the society, man, and the interrelation between the two. He has found no social cohesion in the contemporary society, and by presenting his experiences in working-class life, art school, and professional rugby, he has attempted to overcome the literary defect caused by the lack of social cohesion. Talking about his novels, he commented that

Today there is no kind of cohesive social gesture which illustrates or opens up a wide aspect of society, which in a way disarm the novel itself. So you're left with either the interior element - endless subjective novels - or what we're going for in this country, imitation novels,....Using an old concept of a novel and trying to animate it with new but in the end basically conventional material.<sup>42</sup>

In his major plays, he solves this problem by treating temporary and limited sets of social interactions which do provide social cohesion, such as the anniversary reunion in In Celebration and the wedding

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<sup>41</sup> John Simon, "Theatre Chronicle," Hudson Review, 27(1974), 82.

<sup>42</sup> Hayman, p. 7.



announcement in The Farm, which both take place in less than twenty-four hours.

The time span lasts longer in The Contractor, where the family group and the workmen group interact with each other as long as the task is in process. The interactions are limited and temporary as on the second day, when the wedding is over, the workmen dismantle the marquee and leave for a new task.

The Changing Room follows a similar process of limited social interactions surrounding the activity of the game, which unites the players of different backgrounds, the chairman, the secretary, and even the janitor.

Social cohesion is even more transient in Home. The idle talk encompasses this cohesion, which lasts on as a matter of hours, and even on these occasions of talk the characters stay in peripheral contacts with each other.

In Life Class, the interactions are limited to those in the studio when the class is on. The characters' temporary presence is an indication of the occasional nature of these interactions among the students, the teacher, the model, the principal, and the janitor.

In Cromwell, the pattern is slightly modified. It deals with the positions a group of laborers take in the Civil War of England. The war, like the tent and the rugby game, is the central point of social interactions, but the time span is much longer. In the process of it, individualism takes the place of collectivism as the unifying element is absent. The participants of the war no longer contribute to a communal

goal, namely, the victory, but seek personal advantages instead, which causes conflicts in the social interactions.

In The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, the central event which dominates other plays does not exist any longer as social cohesion is not the major theme here, but the conflict and reconciliation between individualism and collectivism is polarized to a further degree. Arnold Middleton resorts to madness as the method to crystalize his working-class sentiments and to make himself invulnerable to the demands of the middle-class life. The unification of his individualism and the unsympathetic society comes at the end of the play, when Middleton, encouraged by his wife, decides to go back to real life, believing that "It's amazing what human initiative will rise to once it sets itself to a particular task" (p. 102).

Thematically Mother's Day is independent from the other plays by Storey. Nevertheless social cohesion still shows through the central event, Judith's unexpected lodging with the Johnson's family. The interactions between Judith's upper-class parents and the lower-class Johnsons fully demonstrate some fallacies in the life of the Johnsons. Class consciousness of their low social status generates not hostility but admiration for the material well-being of the middle class. A series of desperate attempts to grasp money reveals the greedy, treacherous and pretentious nature of these characters, which offers abundant humor in this comedy.

The common characteristic of these plays are evident. In most cases, there is a central event which calls for social cohesion,

although this event itself often happens offstage. The football game, the anniversary dinner, the wedding celebration, and the war are examples. Most of the characters are from the working class, with some people from the middle class, and usually the focus of the play is on the interactions from people of these two classes. Some conflicting concepts, surfacing mostly in the central event, illustrate the phenomena Storey has observed and recorded with accuracy in a society where social cohesion remains ephemeral, not only because of the contractual nature of it but also because of the broken personal relationships underlying the cohesion. This topic, also a major concern in Marx's works, is discussed in detail in next chapter.

## CHAPTER 2: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Personal relationships are one of the subject matters in Marx's works. He claims that "Political-economic categories" are but "abstract expressions of the real, transitory, historic, social relations" and they "only remain true while these relations exist."<sup>43</sup> Under the social relationships of capitalism the worker is considered as a form of capital, that "(T)he capitalist does not rule over the laborer through any personal qualities he may have, but only insofar as he is capital."<sup>44</sup> Personal relationships are also a frequent theme in David Storey's plays although the extent he covers is greater than that by Marx. Besides the social relationship between the employer and the employee, and that among the co-workers, Storey also delves into personal relationships in family, which is the background of most of his plays. Through the presentation of despair, hostility, contempt and alienation flowing from class consciousness and conflicting individual interests, he records the fragmentation of human relationships in an industrial society.

In studying Storey's novels, Mary Eagleton has found that class is "central to the understanding of the identity and behavior of the character."<sup>45</sup> A close examination of Storey's plays shows that this

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<sup>43</sup> Karl Marx, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Correspondence, trans. & ed. Dana Torr (New York: International Publishers, 1935), p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Karl Marx, Karl Marx: Selected Writings, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 393.

<sup>45</sup> Mary Eagleton and David Pierce, Attitudes to Class in the English

observation is also applicable to his dramatic works. Class consciousness dominantly manifests itself in The Contractor, In Celebration, and The Farm, and is briefly touched upon in Home, The Changing Room, and The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, Life Class, and Mother's Day where the emphasis is shifted to the fragmentation of personal relationships.

### The Contractor

Michael Billington has found that in The Contractor Storey achieves something that few writers before him have attempted: "...he dramatizes work. He shows the idea that men reveal themselves most clearly in their off-duty moments to be totally fallacious."<sup>46</sup> Indeed, this is what shows in The Contractor, "Storey's depiction of his carefully structured, class-conscious Northern English society,"<sup>47</sup> in which, as the workmen go about their work, "ordinary conversation and pranks are transformed into bawdy humor, brutal viciousness and social resentments."<sup>48</sup> In The Contractor two social groups appear. The family group consists of three generations, including the Old Ewbank, Ewbank

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Novel from Walter Scott to David Storey (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 133.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Billington, "Dramatizing Work," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, The Times, 7 Apr. 1970, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Clive Barnes, "David Storey's Contractor," rev. of The Contractor, by David Storey, New York Times, 18 Oct. 1973, p. 66.

<sup>48</sup> John O'Connor, "Intriguing Inhabitants in Storey's Contractor," p. 83.

the contractor, and the son, Paul. The workmen's group consists of five workmen: Fitzpatrick, Marshall, Bennett, Glendenning, and Kay, who is the foreman. Ewbank connects these two groups not only because he hires these workmen to erect a tent for the wedding of his daughter, Claire, but also because he grows out of the working class and identifies himself with the workmen as far as work is concerned. He proudly asserts, "When anybody mentions bloody work, I've seen it."<sup>49</sup> He wears a workman-like suit and obviously does not want to appear distinctive in front of the workmen. He professionally points out to Bennett the mistake the workmen make when they are laying the battens across the floor, and emphatically yells at Fitzpatrick for the grass the workmen left on the battens. Fitzpatrick responds with a flattering "Yes, sir." Ewbank reacts, in a matter-of-fact manner, "Don't bloody well sir me or I'll fetch you one round your ear" (p. 176). His typical working-class attitude is revealed in his contempt toward middle-class people who do not do manual work, epitomized by his son-in-law, the young doctor, Maurice, and his college-educated son, Paul. He describes Maurice as "a bloody aristocrat,...so refined, if it wasn't for his britches he'd be invisible" (p. 176). His contempt toward Paul is even more overt. When Paul, attempting to help the workmen with the tent, says, "I don't mind giving a hand." Ewbank snorts, "Aye, I know what sort of hand that that'll be" (p. 155). Later, after the wedding ceremony is over, Ewbank abuses him before the workmen for his behavior at the wedding, "Crawled

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<sup>49</sup> David Storey, The Changing Room, Home, The Contractor (New York: Avon, 1975), p. 153. Later textual quotes are from this text.

out of his bloody hole....(To Kay, who's now taking off the quarter wires) Seen him last night...wouldn't believe it....Comes up here, you know, for the bloody booze...nowt else..." (p. 236). Paul self-derisively agrees, "That's it. Just about." Oleg Kerensky has rightly observed that Ewbank, "despite being the boss, finds it easier to get on with the workmen than with Paul."<sup>50</sup> This contempt toward Paul is found in the workmen, too. When Paul first appears, Fitzpatrick comments, "An intellectual, you can tell it at a glance." Marshall continues, "Never done a day's work in his life" (p. 158). Paul's own confession seems to justify their attitude. When asked by the soft-brained Glendenning how he makes his living, Paul answers, "Well, I'm a sort of a....No, no. I'm a kind of....I don't do anything at all as a matter of fact" (p. 178).

Ewbank, however, is also conscious of the middle-class status he has gained through years of hard work, and is not willing to consider himself equal with the workmen, "I'm a bloody artisan, I am. Not a worker" (p. 176). With a patronizing benevolence in a blunt manner he employs the workmen with the knowledge of their infirmities, believing that "Nobody else'll have'em" (p. 246). Glenny, the half-wit, wins his special favor. Many times he stops the workmen from making fun of Glenny, "I'm not having you tormenting that lad....You ought to have more common sense" (p. 196). He even gives Glenny an extra piece of cake, after the wedding is over, telling him to hide it from other

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<sup>50</sup> Kerensky, p. 32.

workmen. William Free suggests that "Glendenning is Ewbank's true spiritual son, the one with whom he shares respect and affection" because while Paul remains on the fringe of the activity, "the stammering Glenney, for all the ribbing he takes from his co-workers, truly belongs."<sup>51</sup> Compared with Paul, Glenney does appear to please Ewbank better. When he brings Ewbank the latter's tin of tobacco, Ewbank even thanks him with unusual gentleness, "Aye. You're a good lad" (p. 205). Ewbank shows more compassion for him than for other workmen, maybe because of his retarded intelligence, which makes their relationship something beyond that of regular employer and employee. It would be somewhat stretched, however, to claim that Ewbank sees Glenney as his 'spiritual son,' although among the workmen Glenney is the only one who appears to appreciate Ewbank's compassion. Generally Ewbank treats the working men as people born and bred ignorantly, "They've a mind for nowt, you know. You musn't mind them" (p. 212), he tells Paul. This statement reveals Ewbank's lack of understanding of the workmen, for Fitzpatrick is not unaware of Ewbank's attitude, only he takes it from a sacastic point of view, "It's amazing, you know...the way he surrounds himself with cripples" (p. 230).

The differences in social positions between these two groups enlarge the already existent gap between them. As a man having gone through all the hardships in life, Ewbank holds a practical view of money and the material life, "There is no compensation for being saddled

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<sup>51</sup> William J. Free, "The Ironic Anger of David Storey," Modern Drama, 16(1973), 312.



with a lot of brass" (p. 241). His philosophy is illustrated in his continual shouts at the workmen not to tramp on his grass or on the floor of the tent, "Damn and blast it, man, look where you're walking..." (p. 153). His possessions and the way he treats them incite a bitter feeling in the hearts of the workmen:

Bennet. A house like that, and you don't need to  
do any work.  
Marshall. Built up from what?  
Fitzpatrick. The money he never paid us...  
Bennett. And a damn sight more besides.  
Fitzpatrick. (gesture)  
The windows bright with our sweat  
The concrete moistened by our sorrows. (p. 158)

This bitterness is never made clear to Ewbank or any of the family members, because, ironically, the job offered by Ewbank does secure them a means to get by in a society where they are all "misfits," according to Ewbank. But this sentiment of bitterness persists among the workmen throughout the play.

Another issue which reveals the explicit class consciousness is marriage. There seems to be a tacit law that a person does not marry above or below his class. When the workmen first see Claire, Fitzpatrick asks, "Who's she getting married to, then?" Later he himself answers it, "A university man if ever I saw one" (p. 158). This unwritten law shows in The Changing Room and in In Celebration too.

The general influence of class consciousness on both the workmen and Ewbank alienates Ewbank in the sense that he is not aware of the

workmen's true feelings, although he always appears to be one of them. In his presence, the workmen seem to be pleasant and obedient, but behind his back they are mostly disrespectful. When they first see Claire, Fitzpatrick asks, "How could something as beautiful as that come out of something so repulsive?" (p. 157) Marshall describes him as "a very funny feller." Fitzpatrick agrees, "He is amusing, right enough" (p. 163).

In his family Ewbank is alienated from his children, too, because they have been educated outside their class. His love for Claire can not deter her marriage, and his lack of understanding of his son only hastens Paul's leaving. Ewbank experiences the transition from the working class to the middle class, just as his role as the connection between the workmen and his children, but he cannot fully identify himself with either of them. He is, just as Storey pinpoints in the introduction to this play, "a man who has never really found his proper station in life" (p. 152).

Paul's alienation from others in this particular environment is constantly emphasized. He represents, in the eyes of Ewbank and the workmen, the futile product created by an expensive education. His artistic tendency, regarded as useless by Ewbank, is praised by Old Mrs. Ewbank, "He has a great flair with flowers." Ewbank's practical pragmatism, however, immediately tarnishes it, "Thousands on his education....Bloody flowers, six bob an hour" (p. 207). Paul is conscious of the fact that his education costs Ewbank a large sum of money, and defines himself as "a drain on his pocket" (p. 176). He also

senses Ewbank and the workmen's contempt for his working ability in manual labor, and is eager to prove himself by offering help with the tent, which is mostly turned down with sarcastic comments from Ewbank, or received with a silent refusal from Kay. In despair Paul utters, "There is quite a lot of things I've got you haven't seen....Some of them might surprise you." He then turns to Claire, "They don't believe me. I'm bloody good at this" (p. 156). However, he is not genuinely enthusiastic about the work at hand, for his hands are in his pockets most of the time. Although he finally manages to do some work such as dressing the muslin ropes, he does not feel at home. Maurice asks him, "Are you enjoying yourself, man?" He is uncertain about what to say, "I don't know. I have no idea" (p. 201). When Ewbank finally confronts him with it, his attitude is more resolute.

Ewbank. Do you ever fancy this job?  
 (Paul looks up.  
 Ewbank gestures at the tent.)  
 This.  
 (Paul looks round. Then, after a moment, he  
 shakes his head.) (p. 211)

Paul's dilemma is clear: he cannot reconcile his education with the father's value of manual labor. In this working community he is viewed as a nuisance, irritating his father and making himself uncomfortable. Leaving home is his solution to this dilemma.

The Old Ewbank is another alienated member in the family. Because he is senile and technically outdated, he is estranged from the

contemporary world and most of the people around him because of his senility. He is mentally preoccupied with the past world, and physically handicapped by his partial deafness. He deplores modern life represented by machine-made ropes. Showing off his hand-made rope, he says, "They don't make them like that no more. Machines...all these machines...." Marshall answers practically, "Still, they do their job" (p. 203). Janelle Reinelt notes that "Old Ewbank's rope is the symbol of a passing order - values which have changed more quickly than the men who hold them."<sup>52</sup> This observation signifies the different values held by workmen of different generations typified by Old Ewbank and Marshall. It shows the existent variety in a socially uniform group, the working class. In the way other people treat Old Ewbank the realistic acceptance of change of the working class is once more illustrated, that his opinions are ignored, and that he is tolerated as a senile person who "needs looking after" (p. 215).

In the workmen's group, there is hostility rooted in conflicting individual interests. When Kay's authority of the foreman is challenged by the workmen's inadvertence and sluggishness, frictions ensue. None of the workmen, except the half-wit Glenney, seems eager to work. Bennett will "do whatever is asked of him, no more and occasionally, if he's sure it'll cause no trouble, a little less" (p. 151). Marshall has "no great appetite for work" (p. 153). Fitzpatrick, according to Kay, is "a loud-mouth, a wet rag, that doesn't do a crumb of work unless he's

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<sup>52</sup> Janelle Reinelt, "The Central Event in David Storey's Plays," Theatre Journal, 31(1979), 214.

driven to it" (p. 228). Kay's loyalty to his position is illustrated in Fitzpatrick's remark, "Kay...is a very conscientious man. Always does as he's told. Keeps strictly to instructions" (p. 187). When Kay constantly stops the workmen from loafing and pushes them to work, they react with grumbles and biting comments. Bennett declares, "I think Kay's greatest disappointment in life - prison sentence apart - is for him not to see me working hard" (p. 193). Fitzpatrick and Marshall, in defending themselves, purposely probe into Kay's past infirmity. Fitzpatrick ironically notes, "Kay's ever such a conscientious feller. It just shows the benefits, now, of being put inside" (p. 194). Marshall goes one step further by informing Paul of this blot in Kay's history, "Talking of criminality....You were probably not aware that you were working in the presence of one such man himself" (p. 198). At this point Bennett comes to Kay's rescue by changing the topic, "I wish you'd pay a bit more attention to this here. Just look at the bloody floor" (p. 198). Still, the tension between Kay and Fitzpatrick gradually tightens. Kay exerts his authority by giving an ultimatum, "If you want to work, Fitzpatrick, work. If not, the best thing you can do is clear off altogether." Fitzpatrick, not frightened, threatens, "I'd repeat that to the man in charge(.)" with Marshall seconding, "Intimidation" (p. 200). The tension reaches its climax when, later on, Fitzpatrick and Marshall make the cuckolded Bennett their next target for ridicule, and Kay teams up with Bennett to fire him, "I think you better get home, Fitzpatrick." Ewbank's convenient appearance and conciliatory attitude reinstate Fitzpatrick and relieve the tension, but the cause of which is

never resolved throughout the rest of the play.

This broken human relationship brought by the conflict of individual interests will emerge clearly again in another play, Cromwell. Still, class consciousness remains the most dominant cause which results in the broken human relationships and it persists throughout his major plays, of which In Celebration is another example.

#### In Celebration

In In Celebration, the "most deliberately written of the plays"<sup>53</sup> according to Storey, class consciousness again causes suffering, conflict and alienation. As the conversation of the characters progresses, emotional and psychological problems surface, which undermine the seemingly successful marriage of the parents and the respectable social positions of the sons.

In an interview Storey details the concepts he had before writing the play, "Beforehand I decided there would be three arguments in the play. One was the ascetic saintly silent temperament, there would be the latently revolutionary one; and the chap who...says this is the best of all possible worlds and you've got to have a bash at it."<sup>54</sup> These three arguments are personified by the three sons, Steven, Andrew, and Colin. Through their reactions to middle-class life and the interactions among them and with their parents, Storey presents a

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<sup>53</sup> Hayman, p. 53.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

picture of fragmented personal relationships in a family.

The mother, Mrs. Shaw, is depicted as a unimaginative matter-of-fact housewife. She lives in the protected world of her home enjoying her neighbors' respect, as her husband describes, "When she walks down that street they step back..to bow to her."<sup>55</sup> Her ignorance of the hardships of life which he faces daily in the mine is brought to our attention by Shaw, "I've often thought I ought to take her down, just once, in all these years, for her to see what it's like" (p. 207). The difference in their backgrounds is made a point here. In her cozy life she is always resentful of the fact that she, the daughter of a pigbreeder, married a coal-miner, obviously someone beneath her. This is an element of Storey's comic satire on middle-class values. This sentiment has been perceived by Shaw throughout their married life, as he casually expresses it, "And she ends up marrying me. Never forgiven me, have you?" (p. 156) Later on, through the revelation of Steven, the youngest son, the truth of the marriage is disclosed: the imminent arrival of an earliest-born son, Jimmy, who was conceived out of wedlock, compelled Mrs. Shaw to marry Shaw. According to Andrew, the eldest among the three surviving sons, Mrs. Shaw seeks to have her stunted middle class aspirations fulfilled by sending her sons to college and promoting them more securely into the middle class. Andrew resents bitterly, "...on the back of which imprudence we have been borne

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<sup>55</sup> David Storey, "In Celebration" in Plays of the Year, Vol. 38, ed. J. C. Trewin (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1970), p. 155. Later textual quotes are from this text.

all our lives, labouring to atone for her sexuality" (p. 226).

Shaw shares with Mrs. Shaw's concept that education leads to success in life, "Education, lad. You can't get anywhere without..." (p. 156). He has labored for the sons' better future, "I spent half my life making sure none of you went down that pit" (p. 167). Paradoxically, Shaw himself exhibits a contempt for middle-class people, which he has made his sons belong to, because they do not do manual work, "Mill owners. Engineering managers. Leaders of our imports....Never done a day's work in their bloody lives" (p. 203). Similarly he comments on his neighbor, Jim, "Jim's trouble - Never done a day's hard work in all his bloody life. Licking envelopes, filling in forms, wage-packets..." (p. 206).

This self-contradictory ideology is fully perceived by his son, Steven. He finds that "The funny thing is...that he raised us to better things which, in his heart, my dad, he despises even more than Andrew..."(p. 230). This statement articulates the dilemma of Andrew and Steven, about which John Stinson explains, "Most of the afflicted young people in Storey's works do happen to be teachers,...but the point to note is that, whatever their profession, once they leave behind their working class backgrounds, their lives become spiritually impoverished and emotionally empty."<sup>56</sup> This impoverishment and emptiness are summarized by Steven as "this feeling of disfigurement" (p. 230). In a book, on which he had worked for seven years, he describes the society

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<sup>56</sup> Stinson, p. 135.



of the shabby middle-class of which he does not see himself as a member. Andrew explains that it is devoted to "indicating, without being too aggressive, how we'd all succumbed to the passivity of modern life, industrial discipline, and moral turpitude" (p. 169). It was meant to be a revenge on Shaw and his wife for "projecting him into a world they didn't understand... philistine, parasitic, opportunistic..." (p. 190). Having decided, later on, to make the best of what he cannot change, Steven gives up finishing the book despite Andrew's urging that he continue to fight,

Andrew. What's happened to that re-vitalizing spirit? To the iconoclast...  
 Steven. I don't know.  
 Andrew. Steve!  
 Steven. Look. There's no hard and fast rule. The world's as real as anything else: you don't...compromise yourself by taking a part in it.

His ascetic effort often reduces him to silence, and, at night, to tears. Storey explains that the character who played Steven's role had to sit virtually in silence for most of the play, "not because the author does not think he is important but because he hasn't got anything to say, or if he has, he can't express it and that's his dilemma."<sup>57</sup> Steven acknowledges the affliction caused by the loss of identity, which is forced upon him by Mrs. Shaw's illusions about the middle-class life.

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<sup>57</sup> Hayman, p. 48.

He aspires, however, to forgive the harm his parents have done him and to withhold his own feelings.

Andrew, who agrees with "every word" in Steven's book, has also realized the deadness of the middle-class life,

When I think of the facts I've had to learn....The texts I've had to study. The exams I've had to...with that vision held perpetually before me, a home, a car, a wife...a child...a rug that didn't have holes in, a pocket that never leaked....I even married a Rector's daughter....How good could I become?" (p. 83)

Not like Steven, he plays the role of "an Iconoclast" who wants to overturn the "Goddess" in this family, "I hope in all sincerity that she can hear....The edifice of my life: of his (Shaw's) life - built upon what?....We...are the inheritors of nothing...while all the time the Godhead slumbers overhead" (p. 226-27). His hostility is also traceable to a childhood experience. Being sent to a neighbor for six weeks when Mrs. Shaw had to take care of the sick Jimmy and the two-year-old Colin, he felt rejected by her, "Do you remember when I used to cry outside that door, "Let me in! Let me in! Why wasn't it ever opened?" (p. 246) He declares, to Shaw's puzzlement, "Ever since I was turned out, I've been able to look after myself" (p. 239). His sense of alienation has been deeply rooted since then, "I have never been in....This family" (p. 234). Basically, however, he remains a working-class person although he has had middle-class jobs. He sees Colin, his socially more successful brother, as a traitor to his working-class fellowmen, because Colin is

an industrial-relations expert who deals with the workers when they are on strike, and who can "charm the horns off a bloody cow," in Shaw's words (p. 149). Andrew asserts, "Trust him to come in the front. Only for royalty is that. Workers,...have to use the rear" (p. 163). He has never concealed his hostility toward Colin, "The arrogance of the man. S'what comes with property and position" (p. 240). He also resents his parents for sending him into middle-class life, and rebels against it by throwing away his job as a solicitor to become a painter, painting triangles, squares, rectangles, and rhomboids, which contain "Not a sign of human life" (p. 160). It is evident that Andrew is more alienated from other people than Steven is, which is reflected in the choice he made to switch to painting, about which Storey says, "...the very privacy of the act of painting only increased the sense of isolation; but in writing there was a kind of social contact, a relationship with people and with social events."<sup>58</sup> It is the decision of Steven, equally hurt by Mrs. Shaw's class-oriented misconception, that forces Andrew to change his negative attitude toward Mrs. Shaw. Says Steven, "I don't want you doing any damage here." "Here?" Andrew "looks slowly round the room, his gaze finally coming to rest on Mrs. Shaw" (p. 98). Taking his mother in his arms, Andrew dances with her, and by reconciling himself with Mrs. Shaw he is somewhat transformed, "Compassion....I can feel it in my bones" (p. 247). What Storey tries to present in Andrew's final decision is that "It really is a question of soldiering on, or of

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<sup>58</sup> Storey, "Journey Through a Tunnel," Listener, Aug. 1963, p. 161.

compromising, or forgiving."<sup>59</sup>

Among the three sons Colin is the least sensitive to the confusion caused by the switching of class identity. He easily adjusts himself to the middle-class people's value and concepts. According to Andrew, who accompanied Colin home, Colin had been talking about his capitalistic convictions all the way home, "Cigar in mouth, gloved hands firmly on the wheel," he argues that "the well-being of this nation is largely - if not wholly - dependent on maintaining a satisfactory level of exports from the motor industry" (p. 181). He is described by Andrew as "a man whose life is measured out in motor cars(,)" which he corrects, "In blood! In man! In progress!" (p. 181). Evidently Colin is meant to be the epitome of the industrial West Riding where Storey grew up, which is "the area of the practical ascetic, the man who fights his battles not in a cloister but in the market place, the stock exchange, or on the factory floor."<sup>60</sup> The gross pragmatism generated in this community had been a source of pain for Storey. He describes this area as "a world of machines and labor and commerce, and one in which the artist, the man whose work had no apparent use or purpose, was not merely an outsider but a hindrance and a nuisance."<sup>61</sup> This relationship between the industrial community and the artist can be traced in Colin's advice to Andrew, "You know, your one grievous disability...is not only have you

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<sup>59</sup> Hayman, p. 49.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

never grown up, but you've never even put in the first preliminary effort" (p. 181). Colin, the character who thinks that "this is the best of all possible worlds" has been found unlovable by most critics. John Stinson, for instance, notes that "A token of the man's emotional and spiritual barrenness is that he, unlike his two brothers, has no children."<sup>62</sup> His total ignorance of his brothers' feelings is evident. When Steven asks him the way he handles "the crushing, bloody sense of injury," he stutters, "Well, I don't....Do you....I mean, have you had any medical advice?" (p. 230) It is not surprising that he reacts with indignation in hearing Andrew's accusation of his parents, "I honor what my mother and father have done. I don't give a sod for your bloody family analysis" (p. 137). The frictions between the brothers have been long-rooted. Says Collin, "Trust the Shaw's....Not two minutes together - and out it comes....Fists all over the place" (p. 228).

Because of the different types of class consciousness that undermine each character's view of life, there is no genuine communication in the family. Storey attributes this alienation to education, "I felt the basic tragedy was that education has alienated every one in the family, rather than enhancing their lives."<sup>63</sup> Storey feels that material advantages do not necessarily ensure a better life which the working-class parents usually take for granted. "They said they wanted you to have a better life, but what they really meant was

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<sup>62</sup> Stinson, p. 137.

<sup>63</sup> T. E. Kalem, "Family Communication," rev. of In Celebration, by David Storey, Time, 10 June 1974, p. 106.

they wanted you to be better off. Richer. More immune to life."<sup>64</sup>

Shaw and Mrs. Shaw do not understand the suffering of their middle-class sons, or the harm they have innocently inflicted upon them. Mrs. Shaw does not really go through the hardships of life as Shaw does. Andrew despises Colin and has felt alienated from the family. Steven, the only person who shares Andrew's feelings, has given up his attempt to act on them. Obviously Storey's sympathies are with Steven, for Storey holds that

It is no virtue to feel oneself torn apart, either from the world, or from one's own spirit or soul; neither is it any virtue to be unable to find any solution. However, although for some reason there is no choice, for all of us there is, I believe, the obligation to try and bring the pieces together, and if not together, at least in touching distance."<sup>65</sup>

Steven's attempt to reach this conclusion is admirable, which affects Andrew, too. It alleviates the heaviness generated by the overall fragmentation of family relationships. By the treatment of the ending of this play Storey suggests that the solution to the problem he exposes in the play lies in the character's willingness to take a humanistic approach to it, changing his own attitude first.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

<sup>65</sup> David Storey, This Sporting Life (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1968), p. x.

## The Farm

In The Farm a similar confrontation between working-class father and middle-class son appears again. Slattery, a stocky farmer of sixty-five, believes that "Work's the only bloody thing that's real."<sup>66</sup> His son, Arthur, on the contrary, can not hold down a job; at present he is an unemployed poet. Like Fitzpatrick and Marshall in The Contractor and Shaw in In Celebration, Slattery never concealed his contempt for the middle-class people, including his son and two of his daughters who teach school. When Arthur goes home after a long absence, Slattery expresses his contempt to Arthur's face, "Don't know what he bloody well has come home for. If it's not to borrow one thing, it'll be to see if he can borrow summat else....Never done a day's bloody work. Not all his life" (p. 59). Mrs. Slattery comes to Arthur's defense, "He's worked in hotels....He's even taught." Slattery, "Taught? Couldn't teach my bloody flat cap....Thy sisters teach. Bloody woman's job is that....I could teach as much as they do and still run this entire bloody farm myself - single-handed" (p. 59). He was, in Mrs. Slattery's words, "...very much the sort of man...who, if he saw a thing, went out and got it" (p. 22). But he can not make his son to be like him. His disappointment at his son is made known to the daughters early in the play. When listening to his complaints about Mrs. Slattery's attending night school, Wendy, the eldest daughter, says, "Maybe we should've all

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<sup>66</sup> David Storey, The Farm (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p.76. Subsequent textual quotes are from this text.

been sons." Slattery, "Well, example thy's had, I shouldn't think you'd get very much from that" (p. 14). This dissatisfaction is aggravated by Mrs. Slattery's interest in knowledge and in her overt preference for Arthur rather than for Slattery.

Mrs. Slattery appears to acquire some middle-class attributes along the years of their marriage. While Slattery works "like a bloody animal," (p. 59) she "spends all her spare time in town...evening classes, sociology, psychiatry, anthropology..." (p. 60). This attribute foreign to the working class annoys Slattery, "thinks I'm bloody stupid. Never read a bloody book in my entire life. When she got married she was as ignorant as me" (p. 60). The gap between them is further widened by Mrs. Slattery's adoration for Arthur's literary talent, that she "thought he was bloody Shakespeare before he'd even opened his bloody mouth" (p. 64). He regrets the influence Mrs. Slattery has had on Arthur, "Idolized you, lad. Your bloody ruin.... Been my son you'd never have turned out like that..." (p. 60). His deepest resentment dwells on the fact that he never won Mrs. Slattery's appreciation as much as Arthur did, "...them that do the bloody work get no attention...them that do dream all get nowt but bloody praise" (p. 59). He grumbles bitterly that, "Ne'er see this side of her when you're not here. Done sod all in your life...whereas me... worked every bloody minute....Never loved me" (p. 60). This self-pity, according to the youngest daughter, Brenda, is "the one commodity he's never short of" (p. 19). It reduces Slattery to habitual drinking when he is not working.



Although Slattery is seen as "nothing but an animal" by Brenda, Arthur is not a popular figure in the family, either. To Wendy and Jenny writing poetry seems to be a sign of Arthur's impotence to cope with life. Talking about his poems, Jenny says, "I won't say Arthur was anything." Wendy, "That's more or less how I would sum him up" (p. 70). Brenda never shows any affection for him unless told by Mrs. Slattery to do so. Upon hearing of Arthur's imminent marriage to a divorced woman twenty years his senior, and with two children, Wendy comments, "Either she's a raving lunatic, or so insatiable that she'll take anything she can grab" (p. 70). She is mainly concerned with the financial situation of this couple, especially that of Arthur, whose past record of self-sufficiency is questionable,

Wendy. Three people to support, and until now you  
                   haven't been able to support yourself.  
 Arthur. Quite an adventure  
 Wendy. Do you still write poetry, then?  
 Arthur, Yeh. (shrugs)  
 Wendy gazes at him. They're silent. (p. 37)

Slattery's reaction is stronger, "Jesus in his holy heaven....I hope He's bloody listening....Have I ever done ought to deserve a family... the likes of the bloody one I've got? Have I transgressed?.... Have I overlooked?....Have I condoned?....Have I sinned?" (p. 65) As to Mrs. Slattery, her affection for Arthur does not bring any insight into Arthur's feelings or his works. Basically she remains a working-class person who has no deep understanding of Arthur's spiritual life and they

both know it. After Arthur recites one of his recent works to her,

(They're silent. Then:)  
 Mrs Slattery. That's lovely, love...(Waits.) Did  
                                           it sell well, then, the poem?  
 Arthur. There are only two or three hundred  
                                           people buy the magazine.  
 Mrs Slattery. Well, that's something...At least,  
                                           they'll have read it.  
 Arthur. Yes...  
 Mrs Slattery. It's not the quantity...  
 Arthur. No.  
                                           (They're silent.) (p. 55)

Arthur fails his family once more when his fiancée does not show up despite everyone in the family being dressed up waiting for her. This unexpected result is a token that Arthur's marriage may be another letdown to his family. When he leaves the next evening after his arrival, only Mrs. Slattery is present. Arthur, "Good night." Mrs. Slattery, "Good night then, love" (p. 91) In silence Mrs. Slattery sees him off; the feelings stirred by his solitary profile reduces her to tears, "Mrs. Slattery covers her face" (p. 91). The quiet disappearance of the alienated Arthur in the evening is conveniently ignored by the coming of Brenda's boyfriend, Albert, next morning. Being a factory workman, he is obviously a fitting character for this family. He takes Arthur's place and joins the family's breakfast. The play ends in a blissful atmosphere with Slattery's saying grace before the meal, "For what we are about to receive may the good Lord make us truly thankful ...."

The fragmentation of family relationships is illustrated mainly through the conflicts between the father and the son, as well as the alienation Arthur suffers with other family members. Class consciousness and the different concerns rooted in this consciousness again cause this conflict and alienation.

### The Changing Room

In The Changing Room class consciousness shows, to a lesser degree, through the players' brief interactions. Rugby is "a very rough game full of fouling and physical exhaustion."<sup>67</sup> According to Clive Barnes, it is "a semiprofessional game played only in the coal-mining area of the north of England."<sup>68</sup> Among the players on this occasion, only Trevor, a school teacher, is from the middle class. In doing warm-ups for the game, his working-class teammate, Walsh, mentions Trevor's wife, "She coming to watch, then?" Trevor answers, "Don't think so. No." Walsh's reaction reflects his habitual resentments toward her, which have existed long before this game, "Never comes to watch, His wife....A university degree...." The indifference of Trevor's wife toward the rugby game, "a deeprooted part of working-class life,"<sup>69</sup> and Walsh's resentments illustrate the gap between the working class and the middle

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<sup>67</sup> Storey, The Changing Room, Home, The Contractor, p. 6. Later textual quotes are from this text.

<sup>68</sup> Clive Barnes, "The Changing Room Opens at Morosco," rev. of The Changing Room, by David Storey, New York Times, 7 March 1973, p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> Martha Duffy, "Ethics of Work and Play," Sports Illustrated, 5 Mar. 1973, p. 67.

class, with the obvious hostility aggravated by this lack of communication. Trevor himself is a victim, too. When the game is over, the trainer, Crosby, teases Trevor, not without bitterness, "Come on, Trevor. Teach'em one or two manners, then....Bloody college-man...going to go away disgusted with all you bloody working lads" (p. 64). This dialogue confirms Gerald Weales' observation that in this play there is "a heavy emphasis on horseplay in which the affectionate teasing occasionally opens up to reveal animosity under the jocularity."<sup>70</sup> This hostility also manifests itself in the issue of marriage. The notion that marriage is confined to the same social caste, which appears in The Contractor, is implied in the players' dialogue, too. After knowing that Trevor's wife majored in Economics, Walsh asks Fenchurch, who is still single, "How do you fancy wed to that?" Fenchurch does not answer, but Jagger, another player, jestingly says, "Wouldn't mind married to bloody ought, wouldn't Fenny?" Fielding adds to it, "Tarts: should see the bloody ones he has" (p. 22). This class consciousness of the differences in education and other aspects of life, such as marriage, with all subsequent sentiments generated in it, is a repeated theme in The Contractor and The Changing Room, and is treated similarly in the characters' interactions. But Storey does not attempt to take any political side in The Changing Room. Jack Kroll has observed that in this play "The structure of league Rugby reflects the class structure of the society,"<sup>71</sup> as the players are workers in the local mills or

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<sup>70</sup> Gerald Weales, "The Stage," Commonweal, 6 April 1973, p. 114.

mines, and the "tycoons" who own the league team may be the same ones who own the mines or mills. Granted so, Storey has no intention to make this play a political one, "You could make The Changing Room a strong political statement by turning the Chairman and the Secretary into the bad guys, simple caricatures....You could also turn the players into exploited buffons. That doesn't seem very interesting or relevant."<sup>72</sup> Evidently Storey sees the Chairman, Thronton, and the Secretary, Mackendrick, as people of feelings. Mackendrick indicates that "About one or two bloody things" he has strong feelings. One example is the sight of the poor in their community, "Bloody houses were nobbut size o'this - seven kiddies, no bloody bath: no bed...father out o'work as much as not" (p. 46). Thronton, who generally displays appropriate courtesy toward the players, tells about a dream that he had the other night, "I came up here to watch a match...looked over at the tunnel...know what I saw run out? Bloody robots....I laugh now, I wok up in a bloody sweat, I tell you" (p. 46). Although the reason that made him sweat is not identified, it is clear that he is haunted by worries and driven to a desperate condition just as the players may have been. Another theme, which exists in The Contractor and which gradually gains weight in The Changing Room, is the fragmentation and temporariness of personal relationships. The workers as well as the players meet each other in functional terms. They remain teammates as long as the task is

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<sup>71</sup> Jack Kroll, "Team of Destiny," rev. of The Changing Room by David Storey, Newsweek, 11 Dec. 1972, p. 71.

<sup>72</sup> Ansorge, p. 35.

in process; once it is done, they will, as Janelle Reinelt points out, "merge back into the undefined other places of their lives where they come together with other purposes."<sup>73</sup> Rather than becoming deeply involved with the total personality of each other, they maintain a superficial and partial contact with one another. When the individual is not adequately functioning to contribute to the common task, he is immediately replaced or expelled. In The Contactor, when Fitzpatrick's behavior becomes disruptive with other workers and continually causes frictions, he is fired by the foreman. He tentatively invites his crony, Marshall, to join him, "Are you coming?" The latter practically refuses, "Well, now....If there's one of us to be out of work...better that the other sticks to what he can" (p. 230). In The Changing Room, after Kendal is injured, Crosby is concerned only with the possible vacancy Kendal left, "He's off, then, is he?" Later he sends Frank to take Kendal's place. Frank "quickly, jubilantly, strips off his track-suit." No other comments on Kendal's injury are mentioned. It suggests that as each teammate is competing for himself, Kendal's withdrawal from the team is not much of a concern to the other players. These two scenes suggest that in this kind of contractual relationship each individual is fully interchangeable with any other individual of equal competence. Fellowship is basically created and determined by the working contract; it dwindles easily when individual interests are involved.

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<sup>73</sup> Reinelt, p. 211.

## Sisters

The contrast between the working-class's vitality and the middle-class's impotence, which is presented in In Celebration, appears again in another play, Sisters. Adrienne is the middle-class character whose appearance gives a "general impression of 'style'": she wears a dark coat with a fur-trimmed collar, high-heeled shoes, and her hair is "evidently well-looked after" (p. 60). Her dialogue with Carol soon reveals that Adrienne's personality has been strongly influenced by her parents, a couple of dreamers covered in debts, "Father with his ridiculous schemes for making money and Mother with her endless schemes for spending it" (p. 72). On the surface Adrienne is different from, even hostile to, her parents,

I left home...to get away from it....I couldn't stand the delusions. I couldn't stand the mediocrity....I couldn't stand those provincial people with their primness and complacency and their sickening, stifling self-righteousness. I felt if I didn't get out I would never breathe. (p. 72)

She left home because she "wanted so very much to be a success," (p. 70) although essentially she is as much a dreamer as her parents. She told Carol before leaving home, "I intent to go away. I'll become so famous that people will follow me in the street. Every one will look: every one will know my name" (p. 71). This illusion of a bright future confirms her identity with her father, "I was more attached to Father" (p. 69). Her father had endless dreams of success, "...he started so

many businesses I don't think if you asked me I could remember half of them. He had wonderful schemes for so many things. It was all in his head, not one of them ever came to anything" (p. 103). Similarly Adrienne ends up with a series of failures in her life despite her pretension of being a success. She has been divorced by her husband, and suffers a miscarriage of her baby. She has been sent to the hospital because she took an excess of pills. Eventually she is totally disappointed with family life, "Families are illusion, Carol. You have to destroy them to stay alive" (p. 147). Her being taken back to the hospital illustrates her inability to cope with life in the real society, which echoes the failure of her parents and the characters in Home. Carol is an opposite example. She is "always very practical" (p. 71). She claims, "I was the only practical one in the family... nothing... ever gets me down even when I think it should" (p. 106). The person she married to also reflects her personality. Tom, an ex-football player, declares, "No one gets anything from me for nothing" (p. 123). Although Carol is not totally satisfied with Tom, she strives to change him to maintain a successful marriage. She realizes that "No one wants to change. You have to change: and by you changing they change also. You have to educate them" (p. 137). She has experienced relative success. According to Terry, one of their frequent customers, "A brothel keeper has become his (Tom's) true vocation, his vision of a world where women are screwed and men enjoy themselves. It's only because of Carol that it's something else: she takes the bitterness out of it and makes it - something real" (p. 134). At the end of the play



Tom and Carol stand together while Adrienne is taken by people from the hospital, and he concludes that both Adrienne and they are "Back to life" (p. 148). Judging from the comparative success Carol enjoys and the tragic fate that is waiting for Adrienne, it is obvious that Storey endows the working-class people with a dynamic vitality people which enables them to survive in a difficult situation, while the middle-class people, represented by Adrienne and her parents, appear to be impractical dreamers who never face the world and themselves as they are, and who refuse to change themselves to cope with it. This contrast between the working-class and the middle-class is also touched upon in another play, Home.

#### Home

Talking about his plays, Storey says, "They're all plays of understatement in a way...there's nothing great going on on the surface. It's all got to be going on in the audience's mind really, particularly with Home."<sup>74</sup> A close examination of this play of understatement reveals that the theme of fragmentation of human relationships is carried on with its sad offsprings of inarticulate despair and alienation, signified by the men's frequent sobs and the women's complaints.

In this play, all the major characters share symptoms of psychological crippling when they first appear. Jack carries a cane

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<sup>74</sup> Hayman, p. 48.

with him. Harry shows excessive interest in doing tiny things, such as picking out bits of cotton from his trouser cuffs. Marjorie has an umbrella with her, and Kathleen is limping because of her misfitting shoes. These signs of mental crippling are gradually confirmed through the characters' disclosures of each other's past and their self revelation. The men's dialogue is often inconsequential, drifting from one topic to another, and full of stops and hesitations. Harry. "That the one?" Jack. "Yes." Harry. "Ah, well." Jack. "Yes....Still...." Harry. "Clouds....Watch their different shapes."<sup>75</sup> Walter Kerr suggests that it is because "These two are at the end of their lives....The thought is over, stopped. Not because Harry terminated Jack's sentence with the finality of his phrase...but because Jack could not, would not, complete the sentence if he were given time and air in which to do it. The complete sentence no longer exists. Wherever it was going, it has gone."<sup>76</sup> This interpretation is consistent with Storey's explanation,

I see Jack as the residue of the extrovert who tried to live a decent life and get on with people and get out in the world and have a place in society; and Harry as the residue of the poor old artist, totally immobilized by his incapacity to make any sense of it at all and is quietly fading away in delusion and murmuring and grief and a sense of his own loss but no way of expressing it.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Storey, The Changing Room, Home, The Contractor, p. 88. Later textual quotes are from this text.

<sup>76</sup> Walter Kerr, "Like Pinter...Except," rev. of Home, by David Storey, New York Times, 29 Nov. 1970, Sec. 2, p. 1.

Storey also notes that such a role like Harry, "with all his OH Yeses and his silences and his incapacity to say anything very clearly," has to sit silently most of the time in the play, "not because the author doesn't think he's important but because he hasn't got anything to say, or if he has, he can't express it and that's his dilemma."<sup>78</sup> Katharine Worth grasps the same conception in finding that there is an emotional coherence in "the incoherent, desultory dialogue which expressed their pathetically fractured personalities."<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Clive Barnes thinks that the audience comprehends the understatement because the characters "always suggest words they never say, and express feelings they can never quite express."<sup>80</sup> Benedict Nightingale furthermore points out that "only when they (the men) start embarrassedly, silently and apparently without reason to weep can they express their amorphous sense of dereliction and waste."<sup>81</sup> Both men show evidences of being "residue" by their frequent mixing up other people's names, and by their daydreams gradually disclosed through the dialogue. Jack has claimed to be a retailer in preserves, and Harry a heating engineer. These statements are belied by Kathleen's relation to Harry, "Told us he (Jack) was a

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<sup>77</sup> Hayman, p. 53.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>79</sup> Katharine Worth, Revolutions in Modern English Drama (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1973), p. 271.

<sup>80</sup> Clive Barnes, "Home Arrives," rev. of Home, by David Storey, New York Times, 18 Nov. 1970, p. 41.

<sup>81</sup> Benedict Nightingale, Fifty Modern British Plays (London: Heinemann; Totawa: Barnes & Noble, 1982), p. 424.

doctor. Another time he said he'd been a sanitary inspector. I've heard about you...making up things..."(p. 123). Harry reacts, "One embodies...of course.... Fancies....What's life if you can't...." Jack tells Marjorie that he is in the asylum "on a wholly voluntary basis," (p. 132) while Harry confesses to Kathleen that Jack has the propensity for following little girls.

Although the women tend to be more candid in discussing their problems, they also cannot cope with the society at large either. Kathleen has destructive tendencies, and tried to kill herself several times. Her problem, betrayed by Marjorie, is that she "can't keep away from men" (p. 131). Marjorie has been in several homes. She cries frequently, and, according to Kathleen, is a "Persistent Offender," "not right in her mind" (p. 131).

One common experience shared by these four invalids is alienation from meaningful communication, which often reduces the men to silent sobs and which aggravates the women's symptoms. Storey has noted that in this play "communication between people is not impossible, but communication is difficult, though."<sup>82</sup> Jack, as Storey has pointed out, is the more extroverted of the two men. He has "taken a lifelong interest in public transport" presumably because of the opportunity it provides for him to communicate with others. He complains, "One works ....But very little communication takes place" (p. 97). He tries to

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<sup>82</sup> Guy Flatley, "Home: The Playwright: 'I Never Saw a Pinter Play,'" rev. of Home, by David Storey, New York Times, 29 Nov. 1970, Sec. 2, p. 1.

improve the situation, "one endeavors...but it is in the nature of things, I believe, that, on the whole, one fails" (p. 112). He laments, "The agonies and frustrations...one gives up in despair" (p. 97). Consequently he is in a subdued mood, "Gloom - one sees it far too much in this place" (p. 116). Harry frequently wipes his eyes and nose in silent sadness. He realizes that "Communication is a difficult factor," (p. 125) but he never tries to overcome that difficulty, or already has given up trying to communicate. His self-image is reflected in his frequent use of the word "little," on which Kathleen comments, "everything you know is little" (p. 123). He envisions that there is "no great role for this actor...a little stage, a tiny part" (p. 123). He is ready to accept others' foibles because, perhaps, it makes him feel better about himself: "The essence of true friendship...is to make allowances for one another's lapses" (p. 117). He seeks to confirm his meaning of existence by achieving tiny things such as checking his watch, removing lint from his trousers or Jack's sleeve, and so on. Unfortunately, even pleasures like these are often denied him, as he remarks, "Often happens...see a little pleasure and down they come" (p. 124). Paradoxically, though the men appear to yearn for communication, they choose to dwell, as Harold Clurman has observed, "in a realm of which only the periphery touches that of the other."<sup>83</sup> They talk mostly about the great names in past history, or the episodes of each other's relatives, and occasionally they give some pieces of information of

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<sup>83</sup> Clurman, p. 252.

personal background, but the revelation of private feelings always remains at a general level. This unwillingness to disclose oneself is particularly noticeable in their contacts with the women. The women appear to be from the lower class judged by their language and demeanor. The men, adopting an attitude of the middle-class gentility in their manners, seem to be somewhat embarrassed by the women's vulgarities. Kathleen's uninhibited tendency to cling to males easily leads to the discussion of sex, an embarrassing topic for the men. Kathleen. "Silly to fall asleep with any man, I say....These days they get up to anything. Read it in the papers, an' next thing they want to try it themselves." Harry immediately switches to a safer topic, "The weather's been particularly mild today" (p. 113). Similarly, when Marjorie complains that the chairs "Make red marks, they do, across your bum." Harry changes the topic again, "Clouding slightly" (p. 114). To avoid revealing his true feelings Jack uses the same strategy when Marjorie probes into his marital situation, Henry Hewes suggests that this confrontation of the men and the women implies that "class separation in England has now become an alienating and unreal way of life."<sup>84</sup> Although the men are often reduced to tears more by their past experiences than by the insensitiveness of the women, the latter certainly contributes to it and aggravates the existent alienation. This sense of alienation and the inarticulate despair have rendered these two men dwarfs in real life, both losing the heart to fight for a

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<sup>84</sup> Henry Hewes, "Knights at a Round Table," rev. of Home, by David Storey, Saturday Review, 12 Dec. 1972, p. 16.

better living, and both suffering from a paralysis of will; they can only resort to weeping when confronted with unpleasant situations.

Kathleen is the most self-assured and aggressive among the four. Having been deserted by her husband but still needing man's company, she decides to try once more to win the men's attention, "No harm come from trying" (p. 138). Finally, after another failure in life, she admits, "Get nothing if you don't try....Get nothing if you do, either" (p. 139). Marjorie, after being in mental homes several times, does not trust people, and usually does not tell the truth, either. When the men first approach them and invite them to eat lunch together, she is suspicious, "It's this seat he's after" (p. 118). She lies to Kathleen that this is her first time in the asylum (p. 132). She, too, complains that "Most people don't talk to you in here." Jack agrees, "Very rare" (p. 132). The experiences of alienation have deprived Marjorie of her sense of security and confidence in other people; hence she habitually lives in a situation that is even more alienated than that of others.

The last aspect of alienation appears in the characters' listless response in a society of alienation - they stick to their stereotyped shell, not daring to make any change. Ronald Hayman has rightly judged that in Home, "the fact of non-confrontation is made integral to the conception and to the nature of the characters. They have to be people who don't, who can't confront what there is to confront and that is the subject."<sup>85</sup> The way they avoid confronting real life is to take to

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<sup>85</sup> Hayman, p. 49.

insanity. Storey explains, "Insanity gives you the same kind of reassurance as work....It's easy to generalize your condition in madness, you can inhabit it and become one with other people."<sup>86</sup>

Although the characters' common feeling towards the mental home is that it "is not like home," (p. 137) they will still stay in it and stick to their insanity to live. Irving Wardle comments that what this play shows "is the efforts of people whom society has put away to create a society among themselves."<sup>87</sup> This assertion is applicable only to the case of Kathleen, the most dynamic character among the four, in the sense that she still has the potentiality to initiate new elements in life.

In The Changing Room, The Contractor, The Farm, and In Celebration Storey presents the fragmentation of personal relationships by presenting the contractual nature of human contacts in The Contractor and in The Changing Room, where people meet one another in highly segmental roles - rugby players or tent builders. The Farm and In Celebration depict the fragmentation of family relationships, when the whole family get together only on special occasions. In these relationships personal contacts are confined to a fractionalized aspect of the individual's round of activity, yet in these limited contacts elements of alienation, conflicts, contempt, and despair emerge, underlain by a pervasive class consciousness.

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<sup>86</sup> Ansorge, p. 35.

<sup>87</sup> Irving Wardle, "Flawless Tone," rev. of Home, by David Storey, The Times, 9 Sept. 1973, p. 8.



In Home this fragmentaion of personal relationships is delineated one step further by Storey's presentation of the victim of it - the invalids in an mental home, an epitomized society of alienation, where people lose the courage and the ability to face life as it is.

#### The Restoration of Arnold Middleton

A similar study of contemporary man at odds with his society, which involves insanity, is The Restoration of Arnold Middleton. It shows how this maladjustment damages a person's relationships within and without his family. Class consciousness again appears to be the cause of it.

Arnold, a young history teacher, has been collecting historical objects for the school and for himself. His wife Joan grumbles that they have made the house "a museum. It is not a home, it's an institution."<sup>88</sup> She also resents the sojourn of her mother Mrs. Ellis, who, like the armors, occupies Arnold's attention. Besides these two women and the objects is Arnold's only friend and colleague that has visited Arnold, the English teacher, Jeff Hanson. After the incident with the rifle, in which Arnold terrifies Hanson with a loaded rifle pointed to the latter, Arnold ridicules Hanson's reaction, which represents Arnold's typical conception of people in the society at large,

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<sup>88</sup> David Storey, The Restoration of Arnold Middleton in Plays of the Year, vol. 35, ed. J. C. Trewin (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1969), p. 19. Later textual quotes are from this text.

You've been revealed as a pompous boor. Your otiose circumlocutions no longer sufficient to conceal the cringing, shivering coward within;....Do you really believe that I'm under any obligation to reveal my soul to you? My weaknesses stand higher than your greatest virtues....

Joan states that Arnold collects armors because he prefers them to human beings, that he broke the little statue Mrs. Ellis gave him because "He wanted to get rid of it. It was the only thing that resembled a human being in the entire house" (p. 21). The discrepancy between his ideal image of man and the actual man he perceives in the society in which he lives explains his misanthropic attitude. Arnold has attempted to live up to his "sense of secret dignities and rights" which his mother has indoctrinated with him along the way as he grew up. He quotes his mother's words,

So remember, even if the means are insufficient,  
rather/ Than die in pieces, subside by preference  
as a whole/ You and me and several of your  
aunties/ On my side, though Working-class,  
have destinies/ Scarcely commensurate with our  
upbringing. (p. 110)

This pride rooted in class consciousness leads to Arnold's aspiration to kingship, "Take what we are from everything, and what remains?.... Goodness and kings" (p. 119). He has tried to share his vision with his fellowmen, "All my life I've looked for some positive reaction in people" (p. 101). But what he has found is a society consisting of hollow men. He tells Joan that "I've always had the ambition to be a

writer....Subjects....The extraordinary mixture of hysteria and passivity one gets in society today" (p. 103). In this society his life has been distorted, "I live, I go along. I looked behind....And I see... not achievements towering in my path....Ruins" (p. 100-101). Surveying the whole course of his past life he finds that "Life has no dignity" (p. 108). He considers himself as a contemporary Robin Hood: "A usurper. An outlaw! Always on the outside of things... cynical of the established order...disenfranchized, dispossessed. A refugee...from the proper world" (p. 119). This self-exile from the society arises, argues Taylor, "from a real anguish with the world for not being what he wants it to be....He asks too much of people, and they fail him."<sup>89</sup> Arnold solves this incongruity by taking insanity, "Perhaps I could go mad. Insanity...is the one refuge I've always felt I was able to afford. The insights that irrationality brings" (p. 109). To him insanity is the way to gain his selfhood. Albert Kalson rightly argues that Arnold sees insanity "as a state preferable to a life of meaningless conformity."<sup>90</sup>

The cause of insanity in Storey's plays is provided by the playwright:

The division between those who can make society work for them and those who can't was so marked in my life....I just felt all these divisions both in my own family and the world around were so acute and the pressure was to find some kind of resolution....I suppose that theme is

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<sup>89</sup> John R. Taylor, "British Dramatists - David Storey," Plays and Players, 17(1970), 24.

<sup>90</sup> Albert Kalson, "Insanity and Rational Man in the Plays of David Storey," Modern Drama, 19(1976), 113.

in the plays, certainly in Arnold Middleton, the chap who quietly goes bonkers while he maintains a kind of charade.<sup>91</sup>

Hanson recognizes well this strategy of Arnold, "You take to insanity, Arnold, like other men to drink" (p. 118). Arnold, however, carries on his manner and, in Taylor's words, "keeps its knife-edge balance between reality and fantasy,"<sup>92</sup> that the audience is never allowed to realize for sure that Arnold is really going mad or just taking a posture. Arnold has told Joan that "To generalize about one's misfortune is invariably a sign of moral recovery in my book" (p. 106). Insanity is the method Arnold employs to generalize his particular condition. He finally decides that he wants to come out of this condition, based, too, "on a generality of feeling" (p. 127). Joan's total acceptance helps him be convinced that "I've finished," by which it is meant that the battle within his inner self is over, and he is restored to a normal relationship with his wife and with the "proper world." Nightingale speculates that "the ending of this dense, difficult, entertaining play is unclear, and probably meant to be so, since Storey doesn't find resolutions easy or honest."<sup>93</sup> Storey's opinion, provided in a book review, about the approach an afflicted individual should take toward the society, throws light on the significance of the ending of the play:

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<sup>91</sup> Hayman, p. 53.

<sup>92</sup> Taylor, "British Dramatists - David Storey," p. 24.

<sup>93</sup> Nightingale, p. 423.

"Society, however condemned, is the medium we live in. Its disease, its insanity, has to be suffered....Having washed his hands of the world, in an act of self-absolution, it must now be Laing's task to come back and reclaim it."<sup>94</sup>

This play illustrates how insanity generalizes a person's peculiar behavior and gives him a reassurance of being privileged to inhabit it, taking madness as a refuge. Through the insight brought by insanity, "some little aperture of warmth and light," (p. 109) one gains "moral recovery" and achieves a deeper understanding of self and other people, hence peace of mind.

#### Early Days

Another play centering on alienation is Early Days, where egoism is the major cause of the alienation. Kitchen's constant demand for people's attention underlies his mischievous behavior. He keeps asking his watchdog companion, Bristol, "Do you remember very much about me?....What have you read about me?" (p. 14) Living alternately in self-pity and self-aggrandizement, on the one hand he deplores, "No one writes to me any more. Nothing a politician says has ever been of consequence" (p. 23); on the other hand he reminds Benson, "Speeches have always been my forte, I have the power to sway people which my enemies recognize to this day" (p. 27). He asserts to Bristol, "I'm

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<sup>94</sup> David Storey, "Passionate Polemics," rev. of The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise, by R. D. Laing, New Society, 26 Jan. 1967, p. 137.

top-dog. I've ruled the roost here for as long as I remember" (p. 15). This self-indulgence alienates him from people in the family. Mathilda has chosen philosophy as her college major, which he despises, "...the subject she takes is the most useless one of all" (p. 20). There is little communication between them, "I loved her very much when she was young; when she got older I found I didn't know her" (p. 15). To break this alienation and to rouse other's attention, he behaves in a fanatic manner which makes him a nuisance to his family. He accuses Bristol of being "...a Russian spy. He's been encouraging me to defect" (p. 17). His doctor is "a government agent....He's here to keep an eye on me" (p. 33). He tries to destroy Mathilda's marriage by persuading the doctor to seduce her, "My daughter has formed a profound attachment for you.... She would welcome a lover" (p. 46). His most exasperating behavior is pointed out by Gloria, "The one person who loved you you callously destroyed, by doing those very things you accuse my father of, with your obscene calls and grotesque abuse and your promenading of your genitals in the village street" (p. 38). Gloria treats him as what he is, "Take no notice. He's always making speeches. He likes to hear the sound of his own voice" (p. 37). Kitchen can not take this "insult," as he complains to Mathilda, "Those children...have been insulting me." To his indignation, the answer is, "No doubt you deserve it, Father" (p. 39). In his despair, he concludes, "I don't think anyone loves me. I don't think anyone cares" (p. 48). He keeps dreaming of a journey he took as a child, "Will it allow me to climb to the top? Will it give me back the love I lost?" (p. 49) The play ends in this yearning for his

dead wife, Ellen, which foreshadows his own death.

Benson thinks that Kitchen's tragedy lies in the fact that "He's after power. When he hasn't got it he grasps at everything around him" (p. 43). Gloria similarly holds that "The pages of history closed on Grandpa: he was given a knighthood and went into his act of being a cankerous figurehead whom younger men looked up to and older men despised" (p. 50). But Storey seems to articulate the central theme of this play through Kitchen's expression, "The only relationship that counts is the one we hold with one another. In trust. Forever!" (p. 46) Kitchen's various bizarre actions are motivated by his desire to enter into closer relationships with his family and neighbor, which ironically alienates him from them, and which deprives him of the trust he longs for in human relationships. This play attributes the alienation to the old man's self-centered behavior, which is expressed in a comic form in another play, Mother's Day.

#### Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a comic aberration from Storey's naturalistic style, although the persistent theme of fragmented personal relationships still appear in full measure. This play has "received disastrous notices" from the critics.<sup>95</sup> J. W. Lambert, for instance, was surprised that "David Storey didn't see that Mother's Day would have been better consigned to the wastepaper basket."<sup>96</sup> Storey himself does

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<sup>95</sup> Gussow, p. 11.

not consider this play inferior to his other works, "a constant theme run through all my work and Mother's Day is no exception....Like all my better plays it was completed very quickly."<sup>97</sup> Presumably the total abandonment of realism in exchange for shocking vulgarity has repelled Storey's audience. About this vulgarity Storey says, "It should be vulgar in the fine sense of the word; it needs to be played with vulgar energy and directness...."<sup>98</sup> What the critics failed to see was that in the incredible description of the sexual indulgence and self-centered behavior of the Johnsons, Storey meant to magnify the reality of life he witnessed in his society:

I think they're genuinely a microcosm of English domestic life with their delusions, illusions and fantasies, and their inveterate capacity to live in the past. English urban life is sexually rapacious, and the play embodies that. Everybody involved in it is screwing everybody else, which is a reflection of the world we live in.<sup>99</sup>

This play, then, can be considered as a comedy of morals which conveys a dramatic satire aimed at the moral state of the amoral family, the Johnsons, and, by extension, England. For the purpose of this study, it serves to show the extent to which class consciousness has a bearing on

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<sup>96</sup> J. W. Lambert, "David Storey Week: Triumph and Disaster," rev. of Mother's Day by David Storey, The Sunday Times, 26 Sept. 1976, p. 35.

<sup>97</sup> John Higgins, p. 13.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted by Kerensky, p. 16.



the personal state-of-mind.

In this grotesque comedy, the father, Johnson, is again a laborer. Unlike fathers in Storey's other plays, he bears no grudge against his sons, or the middle-class. On the contrary, he claims himself to be a descendant of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the British scholar who compiled the first English dictionary. Also, he brags about his smattering in various subjects, "I've read Greek. I've read Latin....I taught myself algebra, geometry, astronomy, geology; subjects that would give me an insight into the modern world."<sup>100</sup> His wife, Mrs. Johnson, born into a rich family, so she says, was disinherited by her father after she eloped with Johnson. She constantly reminds others of her titled family line, the de Johns who invented the water closet, not only in her language but also in her clothing, by being "dressed with some pretensions to elegance - a long coat, in the style of perhaps some twenty years ago, a fox fur, and a hat - not eccentric but marking someone of a 'stylish' disposition" (p. 177). There exists a competition between Johnson and his wife, as each tends to denounce the other's alleged prominent family line. Mrs. Johnson asserts that "Doctor Johnson had no family." Johnson retaliates with an accusation, "All your family has done has been to oppress, disfigure and finally humiliate the struggling classes, with which I am...at present identified" (p. 195). When met with an outsider, Mrs. Johnson would not hesitate to claim her husband's preeminent ancestor, "My husband's

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<sup>100</sup> David Storey, Home, The Changing Room, and Mother's Day (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 196. Later textual quotes are from this text.

antecedents can be traced back by even the most casual enquirer to Doctor Samuel of Lichfield..."(p. 223). She appears to be the dominating person in the family, hiding the tea pot from others and locking their things in her room, from which Johnson is locked out most of the time. She has the illusion that Waterson, Judith's rich father, might marry her, and tries to seduce him in a subtle, tentative way. "Are you happily married, Mr. Waterson?" is her kind of question. There is sexual implication in her invitation, "There will always be a home for you here. And not only a home, but a hearth and a bed" (p. 247). Mr. Johnson seems to be a person of principle compared with his wife, "People are not for sale. That has been the guiding principle of my life" (p. 226). But he outdoes his wife by actually seducing Judith, which he confesses to Mrs. Johnson, "I seduced her...like everyone else," because "(i)t's better than selling her, isn't it? Seducing's natural..." (p. 250, p. 228). His conduct has affirmed Mrs. Johnson's charge, "Seducing young girls is all you're good at" (p. 228). This couple's ludicrous behavior is accompanied by their children's performance who are eccentric in their individual ways. The eldest son, Harold, feels that "Mummy doesn't love me and Daddy pretends I don't exist" (p. 219). He decides to marry his sister, Edna, and leave home, about which Mrs. Johnson says, "You don't have to leave home to fuck your sister" (p. 243). The younger daughter, Lily, whom Mrs. Johnson instinctively dislikes, always hides herself in a cupboard. The youngest son, Gordon, has sexual compulsions, "I have this uncontrollable urge to make love to women" (p. 187). He also has a

strong desire to kill his father, of which Johnson explains, "A son has to kill his father. It's what life is all about" (p. 218). The lodging guests, Farrer and Judith, are their middle-class counterparts. Farrer is already married to another woman. Judith speedily accepts and identifies with the Johnsons' disregard for moral laws and conventions. She adjusts herself to the atmosphere of this family with perfect easiness and enthusiasm; she may as well become a member of this queer family.

Storey obviously does not intend this play to be a realistic portrayal of a laborer's family, like the situation in In Celebration or The Farm. But it is noticeable that class differences in upbringing have not made any profound impact on Mr. and Mrs. Johnson's personalities. They present equally tricky cunning and adaptable morality on various occasions, according to the demands of the situation, to gratify their desires. They both prefer the comforts of middle-class life, and enjoy respect people might attribute to them owing to their alleged family eminence. What the audience finds in them are the elements which consist of the lower level of human nature, such as hypocrisy, selfishness, and lust. These elements exist inherently in the characters and present themselves conveniently, given the proper opportunity, despite their different family backgrounds. Their eccentric children are physical manifestations of these elements which destroy the family tie between father and son, mother and daughter, and husband and wife. Mrs. Johnson's final statement is Storey's irony on the fragmentation of this complacent family,

It's what we leave behind us...a united family...its two great progenitors - initiators, each of a different kind - holding above us our mutual heritage - the great canopy of civilization: one the inventor of a book, the other of a means by which we might dispose of it....With that behind us, what have we to fear of what lies ahead?" (p. 269).

### Conclusion

Work plays a dominant role in Storey's plays. The characters' concepts of work are crucial for understanding the approaches they take to life and to other people. Usually "the code was amended in this way: that physical work is good, and mental work is evil. Invariably mental work implied any activity conducted from a sitting position."<sup>101</sup> This premise justifies Mel Gussow's summary that one of Storey's principal themes is "the movement of people from the working class into middle class, and the resulting estrangement from family and background."<sup>102</sup> A detailed exploration of Storey's plays has shown that class consciousness with which the working-class people are preoccupied has a generally negative effect on their personal relationships with middle-class people. The working-class people, obsessed with the notion that physical work is of value, and mental work to be despised, discriminate against middle-class people in their language and attitude. In many cases in Storey's plays, this prejudice leads to the conflict between

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<sup>101</sup> Storey, "Journey through a Tunnel," p. 160.

<sup>102</sup> Gussow, p. 11.

the working-class father and the middle-class son, as Phyllis Randell has proposed, in all Storey's works, "though there may be some moment of unity...the emphasis or the concluding point of view is on the disintegration, the breaking apart of the family."<sup>103</sup> Ironically, a common conviction of working-class parents, noticeable in Shaw and his wife, and in Ewbank, is that some middle-class people who were raised in working-class families, such as Andrew, Steven, and Arnold, suffer from the discrepancies of what society should be and what it actually is. In the introduction to his novel, This Sporting Life, Storey declares that "The society that Machin (the male protagonist) knows seeks to use people rather than nourish them: the means of existence have somehow become confused with the ends."<sup>104</sup> This is also the common accusation charged by Steven, Andrew, and Arnold. Other middle-class characters, such as Allott, Arthur, and Paul, remain on the fringe of the activities around them; their aloofness echoes Storey's personal attitude, "I found that all that went on outside me I saw more as an observer than a participant."<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, the working-class people's superiority over the middle-class, lying on their persistence to overcome adversities in the environment, is stressed in Sisters. Besides class consciousness, egoism is seen as a factor contributing to

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<sup>103</sup> Phyllis R. Randall, "Division and Unity in David Storey," in Essays on Contemporary British Drama, ed. Hedwig Bock and Albert Wertheim (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1981), p. 254.

<sup>104</sup> Storey, This Sporting Life, p. x.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

alienation, as the case in Early Days.

This dissatisfaction of the society tarnishes the characters' seemingly happy life with a respectable job and a successful marriage, if they are married. On the other hand, people of the same background, exemplified by Colin, have been found successfully adjusting themselves to the shoddy value of the middle class. It is suggested by this treatment that the influence of a person's upbringing on his adult life is of limited importance. This notion is also suggested by the reverse case of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, where people of different backgrounds eventually inhabit the same value systems and exhibit similar behavior.

Those people whose values disagree with those of the environment seek to solve it by one of three alternates - to escape from their community, such as Paul in The Contractor; to escape into their inner world, namely, to become "mad", such as Arnold in The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, and the major characters in Home; or to accept the society as it is but still stick to the individual's value system, such as Steven in In Celebration.

Another factor that contributes to the fragmentation of personal relationships, to a lesser degree, is conflicting personal interests In The Contractor at first Fitzpatrick, Marshall and Benett as workmen act against Kay as the agent of Ewbank, who tries to fulfill his duty of the foreman by pushing them to work. Later, the biting remarks directed by Fitzpatrick and Marshall toward Kay and Benette form a tie between the latter two men. In the Fitzpatrick-Marshall subgroup personal relationships are broken down when Marshall refuses to protest Kay's

firing Fitzpatrick by quitting his job. Together class consciousness and selfishness undermine personal relationships in an industrial society, where physical labor is valued much more than mental work. The fragmentation of personal relationships caused by this discrepancy in values is never solved but can be partly alleviated by humanistic approaches, such as compassion and forgiveness manifested in Ewbank in The Contractor, and in Steven and Andrew in In Celebration.

## CHAPTER 3: WORK AND MAN

## The Social Function of Work

In the society where the fragmentation of personal relationships is a common phenomenon, work plays a functional role in social integration. For Marx, creative work is the means by which men develop their societies and themselves. In the capitalist society the capitalist class owns and controls the means of production, and thus the worker is alienated from his product as a self-expression, and from other workers as his co-workers, and eventually from himself because he is not allowed to be creative. But for Storey, work functions on a social level regardless of the nature of it. Usually it is manual work, not creative work, that gathers people from different classes and makes social cohesion possible. Work, says Storey, is "the only unifying activity left...personal relationships are constantly breaking down."<sup>106</sup> The social function work exhibits can be illustrated by Storey's description of how the idea of The Changing Room came about,

The play was very much prompted by watching the actors rehearse The Contractor in England....I found it fascinating to watch twelve people who really had nothing in common apart from the fact that they were actors, being unified by work, by an activity which absorbed them completely for part of the day. I felt there was a kind of religious feeling to this - people relinquishing their aspirations to become part of a larger community."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ansorge, p. 34.



It is work that gathers individuals whom by no other way can be united, and which liberates individuals from alienated situations momentarily to contribute to a common goal. Not only physical labor, but artistic activities, like drawing, or sports, such as rugby game, are also considered by Storey to be work. The nature of such work is briefly stated by Allott in Life Class,

Stella earns her living; I earn my living...you earn your living - a mere pittance, I agree - one of the world's exploited,...but between us, we convene...celebrate...initiate...an event,...namely, we embody, synthesize, evoke, a work, which, whether we are aware of it or not, is taking place around us....(Indicates Saunder's entrance) all the time.<sup>108</sup>

The eminent place work occupies in social cohesion is fully illustrated in The Contractor, which was "all conceived in term of work."<sup>109</sup> The actual erection of a tent on a stage is itself a spectacle. Reinelt has noted that "The physical image of the tent dominates to such an extent that the play is primarily a visual experience."<sup>110</sup> A spirit of robust energy exuberates in the scene when the workers are busily involved in the on-going process,

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<sup>107</sup> Reinelt, p. 211.

<sup>108</sup> David Storey, Life Class (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p. 46.

<sup>109</sup> Hayman, p. 48.

<sup>110</sup> Reinelt, p. 211.

Fitzpatrick and Marshall pull together at one pole, "Heave! Heave! Heave!"  
 Glendenning and Bennelt pull together at the second pole, "Heave! Heave! Heave!"  
 Kay pulls alone at the nearest pole, one rope in either hand. (p. 171)

Socially all the workmen are misfits with individual weaknesses. Glenny is a half-wit. Kay was in prison for embezzlement. Bennett's wife left him for another man. Marshall has married at least three times, and he confesses, "I've been badly suited...in the matter of fidelity" (p. 226). Fitzpatrick claims himself to be "the only one...who hasn't anything to hide" (p. 228). His garrulous, cynical, and lazy nature may be the reason why he can not find a job else where. Clive Barnes thinks that these workmen are "all apparently chosen for their defects as much as for their qualities."<sup>111</sup> The reason for Storey's choice of these workmen of defects lies in the qualities they exert when working together: they form a community and perform with competency on the tasks at hand. While there are occasions for grumbling and loafing, work also provides, as Barnes notes, "the way disparate characters may mesh and grate."<sup>112</sup>

Members of the family wander in and out in the process to watch them work. Socially they are better off than the workmen, but their lack of activity contrasts strongly with the workmen's brawniness. With

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<sup>111</sup> Clive Barnes, "Home and Contractor Shine in London Season," New York Times, 17 Aug. 1970, p. 32.

<sup>112</sup> Barnes, "The Contractor," p. 63.

this sharp contrast, Storey depicts the value contained in physical work, which is foreign to most middle-class people. In The Changing Room, work takes the form of game. Storey sees sport as "a form of work that goes beyond the merely personal and becomes, like art, something transcending both to the performer and the observer."<sup>113</sup> He recalls an incident, a game played in pouring rain, when his relationships with the team were at their worst. "I should have hated every minute of that match, but suddenly something almost spiritual happened. The players were taken over by the identity that was the team. We were genuinely transported."<sup>114</sup> This experience of being liberated from the confinement of self and egoism and devoting oneself to a larger entity is what Storey found in the rehearsal of The Contractor, and what he had in mind in writing The Changing Room. Lindsay Anderson, the stage director of this play, illustrates the nature of it, "The play creates an image of the whole experience of life, starting off from an ordinary basis. The play is about a communal effort by men who really don't know each other very well. They get together, form a team, a unity, perform a hard task and go their ways."<sup>115</sup> Characters from diverse walks of life - the players, the owner, and the club secretary - enter into relationships with each other around the activity of the game. Not only that "the players merge their personalities in quest for their common

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<sup>113</sup> Duffy, p. 69.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Bernard Weinraub, "London: the Rugby Field on the Stage," New York Times, 13 Dec. 1971, p. 52.

goal,"<sup>116</sup> when the game is in process, but the owner and the secretary are also engaged in it with shared responsibility.

The pattern of arrival, interaction, and separation in The Contractor emerges once more in The Changing Room. It starts with an empty locker room. The contrast of the room when it is empty and when it is full of noise and activity by the players is similar to that of the new tent before the wedding and the wrecked tent after it. This contrast designates the theme of the play, as Storey has said, "The room is the main character and the main abstract conception is the ebb and flow of life through the room."<sup>117</sup>

The "flow of life" starts after the players drift in and begin to change into uniforms and do warm-ups. The conversation of the players offers revelation of the player's individual lives. Jagger and Walsh bet on horse races; Kendal shows off his tool box; the assistant trainer and Trevor's wife attended the same town meeting. By the time the trainer arrives, the talk about other subjects has gradually stopped, and the focus is on the game. The switch of the players' mood is gradual but evident, as Julius Novick has observed, at the beginning of the play they are "full of personal occupations," but in the middle of it they "become a team for a match."<sup>118</sup> The tension increases when the

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<sup>116</sup> Richard A. Blake, "Four Hits Plays - a London Preview," rev. of The Changing Room, by David Storey, America, 8 Apr. 1972, p. 379.

<sup>117</sup> Mel Gussow, "To David Storey a Play Is Holiday," New York Times, 28 Apr. 1973, p. 14.

<sup>118</sup> Julius Novick, "Can 'the Facts' Alone Make a Play?" rev. of The Changing Room by David Storey, New York Times, 3 Dec. 1972, Sec. 2, p.

referee enters and the captain, the trainer, and the club owner all give pregame speeches. The game itself takes place off stage, but when it is in process, team behavior takes over other concerns, as the following dialogue reveals:

Stanford. There are more important things in life  
 than bloody football.  
 Clegg. Not today: there isn't.  
 Stanford. Not today there. John, you're right.  
 (p. 28)

The extremity of the players' commitment to the game is exemplified by Kendal, who is sent into the changing room with a broken nose during the game. Having been laid on the table, he keeps trying to sit up, "I'll be all right. I'll get back on" (p. 57). His devotion, however sincere it may be, is refused because it may endanger the group performance.

The rugby game is said to function on three levels for the players: material, physical and psychological. Some of the players are motivated by monetary reward, minimum as it is, such as Walsh. According to Luke, "One week's dropped wages and he's round here in a bloody flash" (p. 21). Some others, Jack Kroll suggests, play it for psychological recompense. He considers this play "a magnifying lens placed over the vulnerable flesh of these worker athletes, for whom violent sport is an uneasy recompense for lives of subservience and quiet desperation."<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Jack Kroll, "Sporting Life," rev. of The Changing Room, by David

But it seems that they play the game mostly for the physical involvement it requires and the pleasure it brings, such as Storey's answer to it, "The pleasure to me is in the pitch of endeavor, sustaining it, going beyond it."<sup>120</sup> Reinelt rephrases it more specifically, "For Storey,...physical involvement is a primary human value, and those whose class or financial status keep them apart from true physical work/sport are bound to be alienated from their own bodies and from a sense of overall meaning."<sup>121</sup> This interpretation has not fully interpreted Storey's view-point, as he claims, "I am moved by some one who feels that life is so important that he is driven to live it at the extremes."<sup>122</sup> What Storey seeks to present is the value of "going beyond" human limitations through physical involvement. Being deprived of the opportunity to practice it, most of the middle-class characters in Storey's plays, such as Paul in The Contractor, Steven and Andrew in In Celebration, Arthur in The Farm, and Arnold in The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, feel miserable. Their despair or alienation leads to another point Storey has worked on in his plays - the significance of work in personal life.

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Storey, Newsweek, Mar. 19, 1973, p. 86.

<sup>120</sup> Duffy, p. 96.

<sup>121</sup> Reinelt, p. 216.

<sup>122</sup> Duffy, p. 68.

### The Significance of Work in Personal Life

Work fulfills its social function to relate individuals to other people only when the individual invests it with value. Work provides dignity and self-respect when the individual's value system fits in with that of the society. In In Celebration Shaw insists on working one more year, despite his failing health, to make fifty years of his career in the mine. Mrs. Shaw explains it as "Pride. You've never seen anything like it" (p. 154). Andrew expresses a similar opinion when he rails at Colin, "My father...has more dignity in his little finger than all you and your automated bloody factories could conjure up in a thousand years" (p. 182). This pride in manual work or the dignity it provides is also the experience of Old Ewbank and Fitzpatrick in The Contractor. Once Old Ewbank has seen the tent, his wife knows that "We're having a struggle...to keep him retired." His ceaseless quest about his lost rope serves only one purpose - to show the workmen his pride in his previous profession, "Ropes. That's my trade. Nowt like it." He proudly points to the tent, "You see all the ropes that hold up this tent?....I made'em!" (p. 181) Even Fitzpatrick, who seems to be everything but a hard worker, claims, "I put a price on the work I do here. Minimal it may be, but I do put a price to work" (p. 229). The significance of work for him is suggested by his reaction after his conflict with Kay, "It's a great feeling....To feel reinstated" (p. 237). A similar measure of this significance of work can be found in the case of Marjorie in Home. She once had a job packing tins of food in a factory, putting them in cardboard boxes. She loses that job

probably because, as she says, the work is "Done by machine now." Kathleen's comment again suggests the importance of work for Marjorie, "Nothing left for you to do, my girl. That's your trouble." Marjorie agrees, "'Tis" (p. 137). Slattery in The Farm similarly holds that "Work's the only bloody thing that's real" (p. 76). If he is ever in a cheerful mood, it "springs up from a hard day's bloody work" (p. 78). His pride in working experiences is not unlike that of Ewbank, "...these bloody town lads...(referring to Albert)...don't know what a spot o'work is till they come out here..." (p. 95). For these working-class people work not only brings material security but also fulfills their psychological need for dignity and pride.

Factors other than work, however, also exert influence on the characters to a certain degree. Shaw's marriage, though in reality not as perfect as he claims, has noticeable significance in his life. He repeatedly reminds his sons of the marital blessing which he enjoys, "I've had a good life. With a lovely woman. Can't ask for anything more..." (p. 148). Though a hard-worker, Slattery suffers from self-pity, "the one commodity he's never short of," (p. 19) because his wife shows an intense interest in knowledge and pays more attention to Arthur, both of which he instinctively dislikes. Marjorie has the propensity for suicide and "Cries everywhere,....Specially at Christmas," presumably because on Christmas, the traditional occasion for family gathering, the fact that she has been deserted by her husband and daughter especially tortures her.

To the middle-class characters who were raised in working-class



families, work per se does not cover every psychological need. Andrew shuns away from middle-class values in many ways. He quits the respectable job he has had as a solicitor; he has no intention of securing any higher education for his children; he despises his socially prosperous brother; and he even tells Shaw, "I've always thought...coal-mining was one of the few things I could really do....And yet, the one thing in life from which I'm actually excluded" (p. 167). This feeling is reminiscent of Paul's conviction, "Got to find your natural level" (p. 182). Like Arthur, Paul does not mind doing manual work occasionally, but he never wants to settle down with it. He tries to help build the tent just to generalize his peculiarity in the working environment. Like Arthur, he leaves home to seek his "natural level," which Ewbank does not think very much of, "He'll be back again tomorrow" (p. 241).

Paul and Arthur are the intellectuals who can not be satisfied by manual jobs. But Andrew, Steven, and Middleton feel miserable not so much because of their job as of the people or values they come into contact because of the nature of their job. Middleton has no complaint about his teaching job. His aspiration for kingship is intimately related to it, as he tells Hansen, "You think kingship's something foreign to me?....I've studied it all my life. It's my profession. History..." (p. 119). Andrew is actually well equipped, according to Shaw, for a solicitor, "...he was so good at law. He could make it fit any set of facts he wanted..." (p. 150). Their mutual complaint is not made against their job but against the society in which they live, or

the values they have seen in middle-class people. Arnold wants to write a book about "the passivity of the society," Steven actually wrote a book on "the moral turpitude" of the society, and Andrew agrees to each word in it. Jack and Harry are caught in the similar dilemma of social adjustment, and they employ a more passive method to handle it. They both claim to have satisfactory jobs. Jack, "What I like about my present job is the scope that it leaves you for initiative....Thinking out new ideas. Constant speculation." Harry, "Rather. Same with mine" (p. 105). But Jack realizes that work does not always relate individuals to other people, "One works....One meets people. But very little communication actually takes place" (p. 97). This is because "Each becomes hardened to his ways....No regret for anyone else's" (p. 118). They stay in the mental home, just like Marjorie and Kathleen, to make themselves invulnerable to real life.

Storey's most "political" play, Cromwell, combines the theme of fragmented personal relationships and that of the significance of work, and best illustrates the value he assigns to work in a society where personal relationships are breaking down.

#### Cromwell

In Cromwell once again the central event, the war, occurs primarily off-stage. Like the players in the football game, or the workers who build the tent, the working-class soldiers assembling for the war exhibit the diversity of principles and personal interests in limited social contacts. Logan and O'Halloran, the two Irish laborers, exhibit

pragmatism by holding that "Principle...is like a coat: jump on, jump off..."<sup>123</sup> Proctor, the leading character, experiences transitions of values in the course of the war. Basically, according to Logan and O'Halloran, he is a person of commitment.

O'Halloran. One thought inside his head.  
Logan. Just one.  
O'Halloran. Leaves all the rest...  
Logan. Uncluttered.  
O'Halloran. A man of action.  
Logan. Every time. (pp. 40-41)

Morgan is his polar opposite. While Proctor commits himself with enduring allegiance to one side and one principle, Morgan commits himself as the situation demands, even switches his side for advancement over his friends. Their confrontation brings commentaries on each side.

Proctor. Allegiance, I see...like the coat  
upon your back...tossed on or off,  
according to the cloud or light.  
No man is this. A rat and turncoat.  
Morgan. And this an ass: allegiance fastened like  
a shroud around his head.  
Proctor. T's a flag of honour you see, my friend.  
Morgan. T's a blindfold, masking common sense.  
(p. 48)

Another stance is taken by the two Irishmen. Criticizing Proctor as an idealist, and Morgan an opportunist, they conclude that they "must hold

<sup>123</sup> David Storey, *Cromwell* (London: Cape, 1973), p. 30.

aloof" (p. 49).

In this world where the value system is confusing, Proctor first submits his allegiance to the side which he believes to stand for justice, claiming "without ideals no man can live" (p. 50). When the battle is won, he changes his attitudes, as he tells Joan, "It's hard...I'm used to having conviction on my side...badges, stripes, emblems, that tell me who and what and where I am.... To live like this ...(He shakes his head) Subversionist and spies" (p. 59). His disillusion by the reality of war makes him want to withdraw from this environment, "We'll find a place where we can rest a while....I am tired. I've had enough of war..." (p. 54). On his way looking for a paradise he is urged to join another war, the proletarian versus the bourgeoisie. Wallace, Drake, and Cleet, a group of people with "No land, no property," want to beat the "Big One" who took the land. They are dreaming that when the Big One is defeated, "You'll see a place where everything is shared" (p. 57). Joan and Proctor, at this moment, choose to "take up neither side....But stand aloof" (p. 57). This encounter is split by sudden explosions which drive these two parties dashing off in different directions. Proctor and Joan journey to a secluded farm and build their home there, "Re-sow the fields...build up the hedges...repair the thatch...fashion walls..." (p. 58). Their solitary life on the farm is again disturbed by the proletarian soldiers. Cleet, in a challenging tone, seems to blame Proctor for his quiet and secured life, "There are men outside who have no land to till,...no wife to feed...no child, no house, no barn...no bread, no

mine...no place to call their own. You have no answer, I can see, to that." Proctor comes up with a realistic answer to it, "I'd rather join that throng than fight again....Do you think one bloodied head...a thousand heads...a mile of corpses will change...by one degree the world out there?" (p. 65) He decides that if he wants to change the society, he must start from his own work, "My eyes are cast about my feet...my toil, my labour...I carry revolution in my head, and heart...not streaked along a sword or buried with the dead" (p. 66). He realizes that improvement of the society has to start from that of personal commitment to work, not to a political cause. He assures the proletarians, "Have the barn. What's broken down by you I can build again." Cleet realizes Proctor's conception of the revolutionaries, "Aye,... 'tis destruction you see in me...and not the promotion of a higher cause." Proctor affirms it by a terse statement, "No cause is greater than its means" (p. 66). This political conflict ends in the surrender of the bourgeois soldiers, Broom and Kennedy. Having lost the battle, and with no food, they agree to join the proletariat with an ironical excuse, "Where the people lead....Then order follows" (p. 72). As a sharp contrast, Proctor and Joan still remain aloof, planning to "(b)uild up, if not the old place, some thing new" (p. 72). Proctor discerns no difference in the new rulers from the old ones, "...but see new masters take up the things they own...new towns, new farms, new forts...new troops - old troopers with fresh harness on" (p. 73). He now realizes that the value of work consists in work itself, not in the profits it brings. Joan can read his mind, "The fruits of the labour,

not the labouring you thought were our reward" (p. 73). She utters the value of work which they now hold, "Let leaders lead, direct us as they will - support the good, and fight against the ill....What can't be taken is our joy in work..." (p. 73). Proctor has decided that rather than remain endlessly vulnerable to the world and its fluctuations, he will try to change the world himself, "I'll have no more of living as it comes....I must have goals, and ways and means....If men are victims what value are the things they struggle to?" (p. 73) At the end of the play, they are borne across a river by a boatman to an unknown place, where Logan and O'Halloran fail to reach because "The price they never have nor mean to pay....They hang like leeches to the things that others have" (p. 78). There is darkness along the way but it leads to a hopeful country free from strife,

Joan. Do you hear those cries and shouts?

Proctor. Are others moving in those fields that we  
knew before?

Joan. And beyond the darkness...

Proctor. Do you see the light? (p. 79)

Storey explains that "That last scene is just the transference from one kind of life to another. It's not really a movement from life to death."<sup>124</sup> This transition of Proctor's conceptions is in constant progress throughout the play. Starting as an idealist, he gradually adapts realistic approaches to life, accepting it as it is without

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<sup>124</sup> Answorge, p. 35.

preconceptions of what it should be, and tries to build his desired life with his effort on farm work.

This play specifically reflects Storey's disillusion with political causes as offering permanent solutions to social problems. He asserts that "looking for vague unifying political gestures is romanticism."<sup>125</sup>

He believes that in a caste society the oppressed are as brutal and destructive as the oppressor, as Proctor indicates, "...the beggar usurps the horseman and takes the whip himself" (p. 66). The main point of Cromwell, says Storey, is that "it has become immaterial which side you choose to be on. Political decisions make men destroy the values which they are ostensibly defending,"<sup>126</sup> which echoes Proctor's comments on the destructiveness of the proletariats.

This suspicion of political solutions to social problems foils the prominent significance of work, which "gives a structure and dignity to life."<sup>127</sup>

### Conclusion

Of the importance of work for man what Storey has depicted in his plays appears to be that for the working-class people, work provides a bountiful source for dignity and pride, while other factors, such as successful family life, also exert a quite profound influence on them.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

The middle-class characters can not be satisfied merely by a fulfilling job. They require spiritual congruency in the environment, understanding that similarities in material life do not always bring unity in values, which is often the reason for suffering.

Evidently Storey not only intentionally avoids taking any political side in his plays, but he also explicitly refuses politics as a possible solution to the problems dealt with in his plays. Rather, he sees humanistic approaches as potential answers to these problems.



## CHAPTER 4: MARX AND STOREY

## Marx

Alienation and work are central themes in both Storey's and Marx's works. To judge the Marxist elements in Storey's plays, it is necessary to have a general grasp of Marx's views on these themes.

Work, as Henry Koren argues, is "the central reference point of Marx's philosophy."<sup>128</sup> To Marx a direct relationship with work is essential for a meaningful human existence, and the development of history is a record of the achievements of human labor. "The entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the begetting of man through human labor."<sup>129</sup> Russell interprets that by human labor Marx means "a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature."<sup>130</sup> This is the process of man's utilization of Nature. Labor offers the opportunity for man to employ his essential powers and to realize his individuality. "How could labor ever be anything but a development of human capacities?"<sup>131</sup> claims Marx. This labor is to be creative by nature, "...the object of work is...the

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<sup>128</sup> Henry J. Koren, Marx and the Authentic Man (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1967), p. 32.

<sup>129</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 145.

<sup>130</sup> James Russell, Marx-Engels Dictionary (Westport; Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. 63.

<sup>131</sup> Marx, German Ideology, p. 117.

objectification of man's species life."<sup>132</sup> By man's species life Marx refers to the characteristics that distinguish human beings from animals, "Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from animal life activity...it is only because he is a species being that he is a conscious being."<sup>133</sup> In the same work Marx also says, "Man is a species being not only because in practice and in theory he adopts the species as his object...but also because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being."<sup>134</sup> This awareness of man's superior capacities is to be fulfilled by meaningful work. Erich Fromm suggests that "Work is for him (Marx) the active relatedness of man to nature, the creation of a new world, including the creation of man himself."<sup>135</sup> Bertell Ollman further relates that Marx considers labor related to human powers in three aspects,

first, it is the foremost example of their combined operation; second, it established new possibilities for their fulfillment by transforming nature and, hence, all nature imposed limitations; and third, it is the main means by which their own potential, as powers, is developed."<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 112.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>135</sup> Erich Fromm, Concept, p. 47.

<sup>136</sup> Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Concept of Man in Capitalist Society (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971), p. 138.

Thus for Marx work brings out the unlimited potentials which are unique to humans, it also relates man to nature and to other men, and it determines the way of a person's thinking and feelings.

Marx's major criticism of capitalism dwells mainly on the division of labor which reduces creative labor into meaningless, forced labor and causes alienation. As Ollman conveniently illustrates, Marx's presentation of alienation in capitalist society can be categorized into four broad relations, "man's relations to his productive activity, his product, other men and the species."<sup>137</sup> In the worker's relationship to the products of his labor, Marx holds that

the worker sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most wretched of commodities, that the wretchedness of the worker is in inverse proportion to the person and magnitude of his production."<sup>138</sup>

The alienation is also manifested in the act of production itself. In the economic system of capitalism,

Labor is external to the worker; i.e. it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker, therefore, only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at

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<sup>137</sup> Ollman, p. 137.

<sup>138</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 106.

home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor is...not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it."<sup>139</sup>

In this process of alienation personal relationships are to be substantially affected, too. The part played by individuals in this society "is that of owners of commodities only. Their mutual relations are those of their commodities."<sup>140</sup> In an even worse condition where coerced labor is involved, class antagonism ensues.

Through estranged labor man not only creates his relationship to the object and to the act of production as to men that are alien and hostile to him, he also creates the relationship in which other men stand to his production and to this product, and the relationship in which he stands to these other men....Thus, if the product of his labor...is for him an alien, hostile, powerful object independent of him, then his position towards it is such that some one else is master of this object, someone who is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him."<sup>141</sup>

By this statement, Marx is arguing that the mode of production determines the individual's relationships with each other. Because man has no control of, and is alienated to, his self-expression in the form

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<sup>139</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 110-11.

<sup>140</sup> Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Trans. S. W. Ryazanskays (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 41.

<sup>141</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 116.

of his product, he exhibits hostility to his product, to the way he produces it, and to the personal relationships determined by this mode of production. This hostility may be viewed as the psychological cause which produces the distinction of class. To Marx the capitalist is concerned only with money, "The only wheels which political economy sets in motion are greed and the war amongst the greedy - competition."<sup>142</sup> Marx declares that in such a society mutual exploitation is the "general relation of all individuals to one another."<sup>143</sup>

The final aspect of this alienation in capitalist society deals with human nature. In this society, the worker's labor "turns for him the life of the species into a means of individual life."<sup>144</sup> By "individual life" Marx means the lower forms of physical life compared with the spiritual development possible in the species life. In Ollman's interpretation, work in such an economic mode of production has become a means to stay alive rather than a task to fulfill human needs.. "Living, mere existence, has always been a necessary precondition for engaging in productive activity, but in capitalism it becomes the operative motive."<sup>145</sup>

Socialism is Marx's answer to the problems emerging in capitalism.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>145</sup> Ollman, p. 153.

It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflicts between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is a solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution."<sup>146</sup>

This socialist state can be attained only by the abolition of the capitalist structure of society through revolution. In the socialist world, the individual identifies with society,

Man much as he may therefore be a particular individual...is just as much the totality - the subjective existence of thought and experienced society for itself; just as he exists also in the real world as the awareness and the real mind of social existence, and as a totality of human manifestation of life.<sup>147</sup>

This totality, defined by James Russell, stands for Marx's concept of dialectics that "social reality is interrelated and that this interrelationship constitutes a whole or totality which affects each of the parts within."<sup>148</sup> The individual thus contributes to society and receives from it "according to his needs."<sup>149</sup> The proletariats alone can build such an ideal society, thanks to the abolition of private

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<sup>146</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 135.

<sup>147</sup> Marx, Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>148</sup> Russell, Marx-Engels Dictionary, p. 118.

<sup>149</sup> Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme, p. 155.

property, because they "have no special interest to defend and therefore are wholly social."<sup>150</sup> In this world "The brotherhood of man is no mere phrase with them but a fact of life."<sup>151</sup> Not only personal relationships are to be improved, self-realization is also expected, "Man appropriates his total essence in a total manner,...as a whole man."<sup>152</sup> Therefore the distinction between society and individual no longer exists, and the socially-concerned individual can attain his species life through altruism, thus "the mode of existence of the individual is a more particular, or more general mode of the life of the species, or the life of the species is a more particular or more general individual life."<sup>153</sup> When this life of fully-realized individuality becomes a general situation, Marx's ideal of species life will have more individual characteristics, and become more individual and more general at the same time.

#### Comparison

Storey's plays reflect some of the symptoms, attacked by Marx in his works, in industrialized society. Alienation in human relationships, for instance, is depicted in the majority of his plays. The causes of these broken relationships can be traced to class

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<sup>150</sup> Koren, p. 119.

<sup>151</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 155.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

consciousness, such as the confrontation between Ewbank and Paul, as well as between Ewbank and the workmen in The Contractor; between Slattery and Arthur in The Farm; between Andrew and Colin in In Celebration; between Crosby and Trevor in The Changing Room; and between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in Cromwell. An especially Marxian element is reflected in The Changing Room, where the players are seen as commodities fully interchangeable at any time with other commodities of equal value. This delineation is reminiscent of Marx's view about the workers in capitalist society as commodities of the lowest level. In The Contractor, the workers behave just as Marx's relation of the typical worker, "He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home."<sup>154</sup> Paul and Arthur, the two representatives of intellectuals alienated in the working-class community, shun away from the manual work which does not fit them. This absence of interest in meaningless work fits in with the Marxian observation that creative work can develop human capacities and fulfill man's need to express himself. Storey's depiction in In Celebration of the soulless Colin, the example of middle-class gross materialism, reveals that like Marx, Storey condemns this value system in capitalist society. The significance of work in personal life and in social life is equally stressed by Storey and Marx. For both writers, labor may offer dignity and pride for the worker, and enable him to lead a meaningful life. Marx sees the decline of capitalism as a historical necessity, which is

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<sup>154</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 111.



echoed in Storey's analogy of the tent in The Contractor as "the fading away of a capitalist society."

In some other aspects, however, Storey drastically disagrees with Marx. For Marx, the division of work makes it necessarily uncreative by nature, and thus it deprives the worker of his self-expression, and consequently the worker is alienated from his products. Storey does approve the importance of the nature of work in agreement with that of the worker, but he seems to hold that work is just one aspect of a meaningful existence; it can be used as a means and is not in itself wholly the satisfaction of a human need. Other factors, such as marriage, personal interactions, also exert some influence on the worker's way of thinking and feeling. In Home, Jack claims that he has a fulfilling job, so does Harry. Marjorie had a manual job in a factory, which is now done by machine. The nature of their jobs varies, but they end up all the same in the mental home. Jack's lamentation articulates his grief, "One works...but little communication happens...each hardened to his way" (p. 97). On the other hand, most laborers in Storey's plays are content and even proud of their work. Shaw, Old Ewbank, Ewbank, Fitzpatrick, other workmen, and Slattery are examples. Their satisfaction with their work refutes Marx's theory that a laborer in capitalist society "does not feel content but unhappy,... only feels himself outside his work, and in his work outside himself."<sup>155</sup> In Storey's plays mostly it is the middle-class youngmen

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<sup>155</sup> Marx, Manuscripts, p. 111.

who feel miserable, such as Andrew and Steven in In Celebration; Arnold in The Restoration of Arnold Middleton; Arthur in The Farm; and Allot in Life Class are all at their "natural level" with their jobs, but it does not rid them of the psychological crisis in their lives.

Class antagonism is a necessary result, according to Marx, of the division of society into classes, in which the capitalist tries to exploit the laborer to the greatest degree. In The Contractor, the "capitalist," Ewbank, however, appears to be the patron of the workmen. His leniency toward the workmen spares the loafing Fitzpatrick and other workmen from unemployment, although the latter does not show any sign of appreciation.

Marx's thesis that "It is not consciousness of men that determines their social being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."<sup>156</sup> is also challenged by Storey. In The Contractor, the conflicts between Kay and Fitzpatrick or those between Ben and Marshall belies this theory. Individual interests and humanistic consideration seem to exert a far more profound influence on these workmen's performance than class consciousness does. Marshall chooses to stay in the team instead of quitting the job with Fitzpatrick to protest against Kay's supervision. Kay's fellowship with Ben derives from the sympathy Kay has for Ben's being made a target of Fitzpatrick and Marshall's ridicules. By this treatment Storey seems to say that this tendency of individuals to behave differently in a group, guided by

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<sup>156</sup> Karl Marx, Karl Marx: Selected Works, ed. V. Adoratsky (New York: International Publishers, n.d., p. 356.

factors more complex than class consciousness, is inherent in human society, and it is difficult to unify the individuals in a society by economic or social affiliation. Another example is the antagonism exhibited by Andrew toward Colin, who is brought up in the same family, and who experiences the same transition from working-class to middle-class, but holds a diametrically different view of the world from that of Andrew's. A reverse example is given by the Johnsons' conduct in Mother's Day. Although Johnson is a laborer and his wife an alleged descendant of a noble family, they indulge themselves in total disregard of moral conventions with their trickeries and seductions, which the upper-middle-class Judith gladly follows in her sexual promiscuity. The different upbringings in their backgrounds seem to exert little influence on their personalities. These examples show that in describing the symptoms of capitalist society Storey puts more emphasis on the influence of human nature than on that of the social system or social life.

Last but not least, Storey's solutions to the problems he exposes are definitely non-Marxian. While Marx asserts that revolution is necessary, Storey prefers more evolutionary approaches. Andrew, the iconoclast, finally takes Steven's advice to withhold his hostility, and subsequently he experiences the transformation that decision brings, "Compassion....I can feel it in my bones." Joan's forgiveness of Arnold's transgression restores him to a normal person. Proctor claims that "I carry revolution in my head and heart, not streaked along a sword." As Storey's spokesman, he sees in the proletariat only

destructiveness, not the cause they avow to stand for, about which Storey specifically denounces, "Marx's idea of the spontaneity of a revolutionary working-class movement was the worst he ever had...it's wrong. They're cunts...just as much as the middle-class who disposes them."<sup>157</sup> Storey's position on this issue, as he has expressed in his book review, is that "society, however condemned, is the medium we live in. Its disease, its insanity, has to be suffered."<sup>158</sup>

### Conclusion

A close examination of Storey's published plays reveals that although there are some Marxian elements in these works, basically Storey is not a Marxist. In The Farm, The Contractor, In Celebration, and Mother's Day he explores the disintegration of family. In The Restoration of Arnold Middleton, Home, Early Days, and Sisters the focus is on the disintegration of individual personality, which is often reduced to madness. In both cases class consciousness contributes substantially to the alienation the characters suffer from. In The Changing Room, The Contractor, and Cromwell work is celebrated as the unifying element in the industrialized society where personal relationships have been falling apart.

These concepts agree with Marx's theories on similar subjects. However, in most of Storey's plays the solutions to the social problems

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<sup>157</sup> Personal Interview with Victor Sage, The New Review, 31(1976), p. 65.

<sup>158</sup> Storey, "Passionate Polemics," p. 137.

he raises dwell not on revolutionary methods, which is explicitly expressed in In Celebration. Rather, the humanistic approaches Steven and Andrew take in In Celebration are the answers. Storey's tendency to seek for humanistic approaches to solve human problems he raises confirms his belief in humanism, "I do see myself belonging to a tradition of writing at the Court (the Royal Court theatre ). It's a vaguely humanist tradition and very hard to define beyond that."<sup>159</sup>

Margery Morgan seems to reach the same conclusion from another point of view in her analysis of Storey's works, "(h)is undeniable concern with social class has a moral and cultural rather than political focus."<sup>160</sup>

Thus it suffices to say that Storey is a humanistic writer who does not trust political causes, such as those of Marx's, as ever being able to provide ultimate solutions to human problems.

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<sup>159</sup> Ansorge, p. 36.

<sup>160</sup> Margery Morgan, "Storey, David" in Dramatists, ed. James Vinson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p. 557.

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